

[illegible][illegible]

! # @ A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Entered in Stationers Hall.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

THE
PRESENT TRUTH:
A
DISPLAY
OF THE
SECESSION-TESTIMONY;
IN THE
THREE PERIODS
OF THE
RISE, STATE, AND MAINTENANCE
of that TESTIMONY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.
CONTAINING the RISE AND STATE of the SECESSION-
TESTIMONY.

WITH A TWOFOLD APPENDIX:

VIZ.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| I. Concerning the present RE-
NOVATION of our SOLEMN
COVENANTS. | | II. The SYNOD-SERMON, which
occasioned the Process that
issued in the Secession. |
|---|--|--|

** Ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.*

Established in the PRESENT TRUTH.

JUDE, v. 3.

2 PET. i. 12.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by R. FLEMING and A. NEILL,

M.DCC.LXXIV.

2



THE
P R E F A C E.

A DISTINGUISHED place, among the Gentile Nations which have been subjected to the Scepter of JESUS CHRIST, was the early privilege of *Scotland*: And since the first possession which he graciously took of this Land, he has never suffered the interests of his Kingdom in it to be quite abolished. He made glorious appearances on that side, in the former Periods of Reformation: And, after a woful apostasy from the attainments of those Periods, he hath set up a new Standard for himself,—in the *Secession-Testimony*.

ALL the opposition which has been made to this Testimony, is principally founded upon a misrepresentation of it. The principal defence of it must therefore lie, in giving a proper Display of *Facts* concerning it; and of the *Principles* which it contains. And this is now proposed to be done, with such brevity as the subject may properly admit of; according to the three different *Periods* of that Testimony.

It has hitherto been laid out, only in a succession of Pamphlets; which, beside that they are of a more perishable nature than Books,—are to be found complete but in few hands. And it must be an advantage, to have the matter of them contracted

contracted and methodized, with proper Explanations,—into a more comprehensive and uniform view, than can be had in the perusal of these Pamphlets.—At the same time, the Writer of this *Display* reckons an endeavour of that sort peculiarly incumbent on him; from the *early* * and *special* concern he has had in the Secession-cause,—giving him occasion for particular acquaintance

* HAVING entered to the University of *Edinburgh* in Winter 1730; he was present, during the next three years,—in most, if not all the meetings of the General Assemblies and their Commissions: And, from what he observed at some of these meetings, he came to a resolution in Winter 1732,—to acknowledge no connection with the Judicatories of the established Church, according to the state which he saw them in; while then in no connection or acquaintance with any of the Ministers who afterwards composed the Associate Presbytery. When the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, in *October* 1735, enrolled the Intruder into the Parish of *Muckhart* (to which he belonged); he gave in to that Synod, a Declaration of *Secession* from them and all the other Judicatories of the established Church,—some Commissioners from that Parish doing the like: Of which Declarations they got extracts from the Synod-clerk; the same having been admitted into the Records, for the purpose of having Answers made to them which might prevent a following of that example,—though any Answers, as is supposed, have never yet been agreed upon. In *December* following, the Extracts of these Declarations of *Secession* were laid before the *Associate Presbytery*,—with Declarations of *Accession* to them; which were then received, the first ever received by them. And he was present in most of the meetings of that Presbytery afterwards; till, having been licensed by them on the 5th of *March* 1740,—he was admitted to a seat in it, as ordained at *Edinburgh*, on the 2d of *April* 1741: Since which time, he has been kept in the way of exerting his capacity for the service of the Secession-Cause.—And he considers it as the distinguishing happiness of his earthly condition,—that he has been so far kept in this way, as to render him a principal butt for the arrows of its adversaries from all quarters; particularly, as to the malignant abuse committed upon him by a late Writer, (among some others),—whom he will have ado with in the end of this, and also of the next Volume. It is an honour, as a strong presumption of being on the Lord's side,—to meet with such usage from one of that Writer's complexion.

quaintance with it, more than any other member now remaining in the Associate Synod.

THE first generation of Seceders is now mostly off the field : And the new generation is ready to lose sight, in a great measure, of the Cause which they profess ; partly through want of ready information : It is therefore considered, not only as a piece of justice to that Cause before the world, (and a necessary information for posterity), —but also as a matter of duty to the friends of it ; that such a Display be made thereof, as is now proposed.

As to those Pamphlets which respect the *Rise* of the Secession-Testimony,—such an account is given of them, and generally in the language there used, as was reckoned necessary and sufficient for a proper view of the matter. The *Judicial Testimony*, with the *Acknowledgment* of Sins and *Engagement* to Duties,—as also the *Declaration* and *Defence* of the Associate Presbytery's Principles concerning the present Civil Government ; these are given entire, as they could not properly admit of being abridged. But an Abstract of the *Declinature* was reckoned sufficient, as also of the *Act* for renewing our Covenants ; with an Abridgment of the Act concerning the *Dorsetine of Grace*, in the very terms of that Act.

As to what is new of this Work, plainness and perspicuity are intended ; with such precision of language, as may both consist with and contribute

bute to these ends. But it is not to be supposed, —that any thing can be got so expressed, as to be proof against the arts of misconstruction and wresting; according to that singular impudence of malignity and weakness, which belongs to the present way of writing against the Associate Synod and the Cause among their hands.—Modern elegance or purity of stile, in a conformity to the usage of *South-Britain*,—is what the Writer pretends to little capacity, and has as little inclination for: While he is not like to be ashamed of *Scoticisms*, till he become ashamed of being a *Scotsman*. Some terms and phrases peculiar to *North-Britain*, which have of late years become much antiquated there, (chiefly in the aforesaid *Declaration and Defence*),—the Writer was scrupulous to use the freedom of altering: And so they are yet continued as in the original publications; because the context, it is supposed, will sufficiently clear the sense,—to any who understand the English language.

SOON after the publication of the *Judicial Testimony*, and before proceeding to license any young men,—the Associate Presbytery agreed upon a new *Formula*, chiefly for *Ordination-vows*; in place of that which they left belonging to the established Church: And it is here subjoined; as it may be afterwards referred to, by

EDINBURGH:
Nov. 25. 1773.

ADAM GIB.

THE

The ORDINATION-VOWS in the Secession:

O R

The FORMULA of Questions, originally framed and settled by the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY,— (which were all along maintained by them, and are still maintained by the ASSOCIATE SYNOD); for being put, at the Ordination of Ministers and Elders,—as also, at the licensing of young men to preach the Gospel.

N. B. The following Questions, as common to MINISTERS and PROBATIONERS and ELDERS, and as peculiar to *some or any of them*,—are distinguished by Titles prefixed to the several Questions.

[For MINISTERS, PROBATIONERS *and* ELDERS.]

Question I.

DO you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?

Question II.

Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith compiled by the Assembly of Divines who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland,—as the said Confession was received and approved by an act of Assembly 1647, Session 23; and likewise the whole doctrine contained in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the said Westminster Assembly;—to be founded upon the word of God: And do you acknowledge the said Confession as the Confession of your Faith: And will you, through grace, firmly and constantly adhere to the doctrine of the said Confession and Catechisms,—and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain and defend the same; against all Deistical, Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian, Antinomian, and other doctrines, tenets and opinions whatsoever, contrary to or inconsistent

with the said Confession and Catechisms ;—and particularly against the many gross and dangerous errors vented and maintained by Messrs Simson and Campbell ; which are specified and condemned in the judicial Act and Testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery, [now the Associate Synod *] ?

Question III.

Are you persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of his Church, hath appointed a particular form of government to take place therein,—distinct from Civil Government, and not subordinate to the same ; and that Presbyterial Church-Government, without any superiority of office above a teaching Presbyter, in the due subordination of judicatories, (such as of Kirk-Sessions to Presbyteries, of Presbyteries to Provincial Synods, and of Provincial Synods to General Assemblies),—is the only form of government laid down and appointed by the Lord Christ in his word, to continue in his Church to the end of the world unalterable ;—which accordingly has been owned and received by the Church of Scotland, as the only government of divine institution and appointment ; as is evident from the Covenants, National and Solemn League, which this Church and land have sworn and come under to the Most High God ; and from many of her public acts and constitutions, particularly from the second Book of Discipline,—and the propositions concerning Church-Government, as the said propositions were received and approved by an act of Assembly 1645, session 16 : And do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline,—and never to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof ; but that you will, to the utmost of your power in your station, during all the days of your life, maintain, support and defend the same,—together with the purity of worship received and practised in this Church ; against all Erastian, Prelatic, Sectarian, or other tenets, opinions or forms of worship and government, whatsoever,—contrary to or inconsistent with the said covenanted worship, government and discipline,—

* The inclosed words were added, at the erection of the Associate Synod.

pline,—sworn to in our Covenants, National and Solemn League?

Question IV.

Do you own and acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant, frequently sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks in this kingdom; and particularly as explained by the General Assembly 1638, to abjure the hierarchy and the five articles of Perth: Do you likewise own and acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant, for maintaining and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms,—sworn and subscribed by all ranks in Scotland and England, in the year 1643; and particularly as renewed in Scotland, with an Acknowledgment of sins and an Engagement to duties, in the year 1648:—And do you promise, through grace, to adhere to these Covenants; and, in your station, to prosecute the ends of them?

Question V.

Do you approve of the Act, Declaration and Testimony,—for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland; enacted and emitted by the Associate Presbytery: And do you in your judgment disapprove of the several steps of defection, both in former and present times, condemned in the said Act; as contrary to the word of God, the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations?

Question VI.

[*For MINISTERS and PROBATIONERS.*]

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness,—unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, agreeable to the word of God; and to be subject to them in the Lord, [and to the other Presbyteries of the Association, and the Associate Synod, as the Lord in his Providence shall cast your lot*]: And do you promise that you will maintain the

* The inclosed words were added, at the erection of the Associate Synod.

the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive course from the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland ; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause ;—and this you promise through grace, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein ?

[*For* ELDERS.]

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of the Session in this congregation : And do you promise that you will maintain the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive course from the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland ; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause ;—and this you promise through grace, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein ?

Question VII.

[*For* MINISTERS.]

ARE not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy Ministry ; and not any selfish views or worldly designs or interest ?

[*For* PROBATIONERS.]

ARE not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducements to accept of a licence to preach the Gospel as a Probationer for the holy Ministry ; and not any selfish views, or wordly designs or interest ?

[*For*

[*For* ELDERS.]

ARE not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in the edification of his body,—your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the office of Eldership in this congregation; and not any selfish views, or worldly designs or interest.

Question VIII.

[*For* MINISTERS.]

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call to the Ministry?

[*For* ELDERS.]

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring your call to the office of Eldership in this congregation?

Question IX.

[*For* MINISTERS.]

Do you engage, in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to rule well your own family, [*if it shall please the Lord to give you one**]; and to live an holy and circumspect life,—following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: And do you engage, in the strength of the same grace,—faithfully, diligently and chearfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ?

[*For* PROBATIONERS.]

Do you engage, in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to live an holy and circumspect life,—following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; and to preach the Gospel, wherever you shall be called, faithfully and honestly,—not with the enticing

* The inclosed words are to be used as there is occasion.

enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the purity and simplicity thereof, not ceasing to declare the whole counsel of God ;—as also to catechise the people and visit the sick, as you shall have access and opportunity : And to perform whatever other duties are incumbent on you from the word of God, as a Probationer for the holy Ministry ; in order to the convincing and reclaiming of sinners, and the edifying and building up of the body of Christ ?

[*For* E L D E R S .]

Do you engage, [each of you*], in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to rule well your own family, [and you—if it shall please the Lord to give you one*] ; and to live an holy and circumspect life,—following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Question X.

[*For* M I N I S T E R S .]

Do you accept of, and close with the call to be Pastor of this Associate Congregation ; and promise, through grace, to perform all the duties of a faithful Minister of the Gospel among this people,—in preaching the Gospel among them, not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the purity and simplicity thereof,—not ceasing to declare unto them the whole counsel of God ; as also in catechising, exhorting from house to house, visiting the sick : And performing whatever other duties or means are incumbent on you from the word of God, as a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ ; for the convincing and reclaiming of sinners, and for the edifying and building up of the body of Christ ?

[*For* E L D E R S .]

Do you accept of, and close with your call to the office of Eldership in this congregation : And do you engage, through grace, diligently and chearfully to discharge all the parts of the office of the Eldership ; as to whatever duties

* The inclosed words are to be used as there is occasion.

duties or means are incumbent upon and competent unto you in that office, for the edifying and building up of the body of Christ in this congregation? *

And all these things you promise and engage unto, through grace,—as you will be answerable, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints; and as you would desire to be found among that happy company, at his glorious appearing?

[The

* Two other *Questions* were added to this *Formula* by the Associate Synod, in April 1747; as comes properly to be set forth in the next Volume. But these *Questions* may be here subjoined, viz.

[*For Ministers, Probationers, and Elders.*]

Question XI.

Are you satisfied with, and do you purpose to adhere unto and maintain the principles about the present Civil Government,—which are declared and maintained in the Associate Presbytery's answers to Mr Nairn's reasons of dissent, with the defence thereto subjoined?

Question XII.

Do you acknowledge and promise subjection to *this Presbytery in subordination to the Associate Synod*, [as to Elders, it runs;—*the Session of this Congregation, in subordination to the Associate Presbytery of—, and to the Associate Synod*],—as presently constituted in a way of testifying against the sinful management of the prevailing party in the Synod, at some of the first diets of their meeting at Edinburgh in April 1747; or other *Presbyteries in that subordination, as you shall be regularly called* [This clause is omitted as to Elders];—and do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain the said testimony, in your station and capacity: And do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain,—the sentence of Synod in April 1746, concerning the religious clause of some Burgesses-oaths; and that in opposition to all tenets and practices to the contrary?

[The following *Act* may properly have a place, after the preceding *Formula*.]

Edinburgh, August 26. 1761.

The Associate Synod calling for the Report of the proceedings of their Committee of Overtures, the following Overture was given in and read, *viz.* “ That the Synod
 “ would consider of some proper method of cautioning
 “ those under their inspection who may be pointing to-
 “ wards public work in the Church, against an affected
 “ pedantry of stile and pronounciation and politeness of
 “ expression, in delivering the truths of the Gospel,—as
 “ being an using the enticing words of man’s wisdom, and
 “ inconsistent with that gravity which the weight of the
 “ matter of the Gospel requires ; and as proceeding from
 “ an affectation to accommodate the Gospel in point of
 “ stile, which (if not prevented) may at length issue in
 “ attempts to accommodate it also in point of matter,—
 “ to the corrupted taste of a carnal generation : And that
 “ they would recommend it to all the Ministers of this
 “ Synod, to shew a suitable pattern in this matter ; en-
 “ deavouring in their public Ministrations, by the mani-
 “ festation of the truth in plainness and gravity, to recom-
 “ mend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight
 “ of God : And that at the same time the Synod give
 “ caution,—against all such meanness and impropriety of
 “ language, as hath a tendency to bring discredit upon the
 “ Gospel ; as also against using technical, philosophical
 “ and learned terms, that are not commonly understood.”

The above Overture being again read, and reasoned upon ; the Synod agreed, without a vote,—in appointing, recommending and cautioning accordingly. And further, they recommend to the several Presbyteries,—to have an extract of this act ingrossed in their respective books ; and to be careful to conform thereto, in the licensing of young men.

A LIST of the several *Pamphlets* which contain the *Rise* and *State* of the Secession-Testimony, and from which the *Display* in this Volume is made : With the years in which they were published ; and the *Octavo* pages (some in very small and close print) of which they consist.

I. A *List* of the Pamphlets which contain the *Rise* of the Secession-Testimony.

	Pages.
1. <i>The STONE rejected by the Builders, exalted as the Head-Stone of the Corner : A Sermon [from Psal. cxviii. 22.] at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling,---at Perth, October 10th 1732; by Mr Ebenezer Erskine, Minister of the Gospel at Stirling.—1733.</i>	48
2. <i>The True State of the process against Mr Ebenezer Erskine, before the Synod and General Assembly.—1733.</i>	80
3. <i>The Representations of Masters Ebenezer Erskine and James Fisher, and of Masters William Wilson and Alexander Moncrieff; to the Commission of the General Assembly in August.—1733.</i>	88
4. <i>A Review of the Narrative and State of the Proceedings of the Judicatories against [the four Brethren], emitted by a Committee of the Commission.---1734.</i>	87
5. <i>A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government, and Discipline of the Church of Scotland: Or, Reasons by [the four Brethern] for their Protestation (bearing a Secession) entered before the Commission in November 1733; upon the intimation of a Sentence loosing their relation to their Parishes.---1734.</i>	116
6. <i>Reasons by [the four Brethern], why they have not acceded to the Judicatories of the Established Church.---1735.</i>	44
	463

II. A List of the Pamphlets (being public *Acts* and *Deeds*), which contain the *State* of the Secession-Testimony.

	Pages.
1. <i>Act, Declaration and Testimony</i> ; for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of <i>Scotland</i> : By the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> .---1737.	112
2. <i>Acts and Proceedings</i> of the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> , containing their <i>Declination</i> .---1739.	44
3. <i>Act</i> of the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> , concerning the <i>Doctrine of Grace</i> .---1744.	76
4. <i>Act</i> of the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> , for <i>Renewing</i> the <i>National Covenant</i> of <i>Scotland</i> ; and the <i>Solemn League and Covenant</i> of the <i>Three Nations</i> .---1744.	42
5. <i>Answers</i> by the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> to [Papers given in to them by] <i>Mr Thomas Nairn</i> ; together with a <i>Declaration</i> and <i>Defence</i> of their principles anent the present <i>Civil Government</i> .---1744.	104
	378

The only escapes of the Press that have been observed, which might any way incommode the Reader,—are to be corrected as follows, *viz.*

Page 58. Note line 4. for an read on
 63. l. 33. for pretended read pretend
 110. l. 26. dele and
 114. note l. 2. read Rom: i. 11.
 182. l. 13. for *sense* read *faith*
 l. 14. for *faith* read *sense*
 227. l. 19. for 1749 read 1649
 312. l. 5. for 6 read 16.

A Note omitted at the foot of p. 144, is placed at the foot of p. 164.

It is a mistake of numbering the pages, at p. 167,---which is corrected at p. 225.

As to some mistakes of smaller moment,

Page vii. l. 26. read *Doctrine*
 63. l. 22. read *horribly*
 80. l. 23. read *unparalleled*
 280. l. 7. read *peculiarly*
 350. l. 4. read *Covenanting-work*
 397. l. 2. for *Th* read *The*

In some places for *maintainance* read *maintenance*.

T H E

THE CONTENTS

OF THIS VOLUME.

PERIOD I.

	Pages.
The RISE of the <i>Secession-Testimony</i> .	25
I. Of the <i>Overture</i> of the General Assembly 1731, concerning the method of planting vacant Churches.	25
II. Of the <i>Act</i> of Assembly 1732, upon the said <i>Overture</i> .	26
III. Of Mr <i>Erskine's</i> Sermon, at the opening of the Synod of <i>Perth</i> and <i>Stirling</i> , in <i>October</i> 1732; and their <i>Process</i> s for it against him.	26
IV. Of the <i>Process</i> s against him and his three Brethren, before the Assembly 1733.	27
V. Of the <i>Process</i> s against the four Brethren, before the Commission in <i>August</i> 1733.	30
VI. Of the <i>Process</i> s against them, before the Commission in <i>November</i> 1733; and their <i>Secession</i> .	32
VII. Of their constituting themselves into the <i>Associate Presbytery</i> .	36
VIII. Of their <i>Review</i> of the Commission's Narrative.	36
IX. Of their <i>First</i> , or Extra-judicial <i>Testimony</i> ; enlarging upon the Reasons of their <i>Secession</i> .	37
X. Of the <i>Public Evils</i> they were testifying against.	41
XI. Of their <i>Restoration</i> by the Assembly 1734.	47
XII. Of their <i>Reasons</i> of Non-Accession to the <i>Judicatories</i> of the Established Church.	47

P E R I O D II.

The STATE of the *Secession-Testimony*. - 50

S T E P I.

The *Judicial* TESTIMONY. - 51The *Reasons* for publishing it. - 51

The PREAMBLE of it. - 53

CHAP. I. The *approving* part of the Testimony. - 54CHAP. II. The *condemning* part of the Testimony. - 63SECTION I. *Public Evils* from the year 1650, to the Revolution in 1688. - 63SECTION II. *Public Evils* from the Revolution to the Accession of GEORGE I. - 85SECTION III. *Public Evils* from the Accession of GEORGE I, till the publication of the Testimony. - 97

ARTICLE I. A general View of Matters. - 97

ARTICLE II. Professor *Simson's* Errors. - 99ARTICLE III. Professor *Campbell's* Errors, and the Assembly's conduct with him. - 112ARTICLE IV. *Another Attack* upon Scripture-Doctrine. - 134ARTICLE V. The *Negligence* of the General Assemblies, concerning Error. - 136ARTICLE VI. *Other Public Evils*, since the Accession of GEORGE I. - 139CHAP. III. The *Asserting* part of the Testimony. - 148SECTION I. Concerning *Doctrine*. - 149SECTION II. Concerning *Worship, Government, and Discipline*. - 156

CONCLUSION. - 163

CONTENTS.

xvi

STEP II. The Declinature. - 165

STEP III.

The Act concerning the *Doctrine of Grace.* - 171

SECTION I. Concerning the Injury done to the *Doctrine of Grace*, by the Assembly 1717. - - - 173

SECTION II. Concerning the Injuries done to the *Doctrine of Grace*, by the Assemblies 1720 and 1722. - - - 176

ARTICLE I. Of the Injury done to the *Doctrine of Grace*, under the Head of *universal Atonement and Pardon.* - - - 178

ARTICLE II.—Concerning the *Nature of Faith.* - 181

ARTICLE III.—Under the odious Title of *Holiness not necessary to Salvation.* - - - 190

ARTICLE IV.—Of *Fear of Punishment* and *Hope of Reward*, not allowed to be *Motives* of a Believer's Obedience. - - - 196

ARTICLE V.—Under this Head, that the Believer *is not under the Law as a rule of Life.* - 201

ARTICLE VI.—Of what are called the *Six Antinomian Paradoxes.* - - - 207

SECTION III. A View of *Evangelical Subjection and Obedience* to the Moral Law. - - - 211

ARTICLE I. Concerning the *Obligation* of Obedience to the Moral Law. - - - 212

ARTICLE II. Concerning the *Evangelical Grounds* of Obedience to the Law. - - - 214

ARTICLE III. The *Connexion* betwixt God's Covenant of Grace and our Covenant of Duties, and the *Influence* the one has upon the other. - - - 217

STEP

STEP IV.

The <i>Act</i> for renewing our COVENANTS.	220
I. Of the <i>Act</i> itself.	221
II. The <i>Acknowledgment</i> of Sins.	225
III. The <i>Engagement</i> unto Duties.	248
1st, The <i>Renovation</i> of our Covenants, by the <i>Ministers</i> of the Presbytery.	251
2dly, Their <i>Act</i> for making the <i>Renovation</i> of our Covenants—the term of <i>Ministerial</i> and <i>Christian</i> Communion.	252
3dly, Their <i>Act</i> about the <i>Order</i> of Covenanting-work.	253
1. The <i>Progress</i> of Covenanting-work hitherto, in their Congregations ; with the particular <i>method</i> of procedure.	254
2. Their admitting <i>women</i> as well as men to swear and subscribe the Bond, accounted for.	256

STEP V.

The ANSWERS to Mr <i>Nairn</i> , with the <i>Declaration</i> and <i>Defence</i> subjoined.	257
The <i>Rise</i> of the Controversy with Mr <i>Nairn</i> , and his <i>Se-cession</i> .	257
The <i>Substance</i> of the Answers, &c.	258
HEAD I. Concerning the Presbytery's <i>manner</i> of Re- newing our Covenants.	258
HEAD II. Concerning the Presbytery's <i>Principles</i> about the present Civil Government.	274
INTRODUCTION.	274
DECLARATION and DEFENCE of the Associate Presbytery's <i>Principles</i> anent the present Civil Government.	278
PART I. Concerning the <i>Corruptions</i> of the pre- sent Civil Government, in matters of Religion.	278

CONTENTS.

xxiii

PART II. Concerning the *Authority* of, and *Subjection* to the present Civil Government. - 289

SECTION I. The *true State* of the Question. - 290

SECTION II. A *Defence* of the Presbytery's Judgment concerning the present Civil Government. 292

ARTICLE I. The agreeableness of the Presbytery's Judgment to the plain *Tenor* of *Scripture*. - 292

PROOF I. From *Scripture-precepts*. - 293

ARGUMENT I. From Prov. xxiv. 21. 293

ARGUMENT II. From Eccl. x. 4. - 297

ARGUMENT III. From Luke xx. 25. 300

ARGUMENT IV. From Rom. xiii. 1,—7. 304

ARGUMENT V. From Titus iii. 1. - 317

ARGUMENT VI. From 1 Pet. ii. 13,—17. 318

ARGUMENT VII. From the *Conformity* of the *Precepts* insisted on, with other *Scriptures*. - 321

PROOF II. From *Scripture-examples*. - 325

PROOF III. From the *perpetual Obligation* and *Imitableness* of the *Precepts* and *Examples* insisted on. - 332

ARTICLE II. The Agreeableness of the Presbytery's Judgment to the *Principles* of all the *Reformed Churches*. - 335

PROOF I. From the Principles of the *foreign* Reformed Churches. - 336

PROOF II. From the Principles of the Church of Scotland. - 337

ARGUMENT I. From her Principles at the Reformation from *Popery*. - 337

ARGUMENT II. From her Principles at the Reformation from *Prelacy*. 338

ARGUMENT III. From her Principles in the late Period of *Persecution*. - 340

SECTION

SECTION III. CONCLUSION of the whole.	342
APPENDIX I. Concerning the Renovation of our Solemn Covenants.	345
PART I. The Warrants for Solemn Covenanting under the New Testament,	345
PART II. A Defence of Solemn Covenanting, in opposition to the Preface of a late Survey,	355
SECTION I. Of Solemn Covenanting.	357
SECTION II. Of <i>Renewing</i> Solemn Covenants.	361
SECTION III. Of the Associate Presbytery's manner of <i>Renewing</i> our Solemn Covenants.	372
APPENDIX II. Mr Erskine's Synod-Sermon,	381

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Second Volume will exhibit the MAINTENANCE of the Secession-Testimony by the *Associate Synod*; giving a View of all their Public Acts and Proceedings: In which (among many other things) the Controversy about the *Religious Clause* of some Burgefs-Oaths, the Synod's *Decision* upon that Subject, the *Rupture* and *Restoration* of the Associate Synod, and their *Proceedings* in the case of their separating Brethren,—will be found explained and vindicated, more fully and distinctly than has been done in any former Publications.

THE
PRESENT TRUTH:

A
DISPLAY
OF THE
SECESSION-TESTIMONY;

In the THREE PERIODS of the RISE, STATE, and
MAINTENANCE of that Testimony.

PERIOD I.

The RISE of the Secession-Testimony.

AT a time when night-darkness had proceeded very far, in our land,—with regard to the interests of religion, and of the Reformation-cause; the Lord was mercifully pleased to effectuate the dawning of a new day, in the RISE of the *Secession-Testimony*. As,

I. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in May 1731, had an *overture* before them,—concerning the method of planting vacant churches: A kind of supplement to the law of patronage; being proposed as a rule for the settlement of congregations where patrons should neglect, or be pleased to wave the exercise of their right.

According to this *overture*, Ministers were not to be chosen by congregations; but were to be imposed upon them, by the majority in a conjunct meeting of heritors

and elders: And all heritors were to be admitted of as voters in that meeting, under the simple qualification of being Protestants.—This overture the Assembly transmitted to the several presbyteries; that they might return their opinion to the next Assembly, whether it should be turned into a standing act: And they enjoined the presbyteries to observe it, in the mean time.

II. At next Assembly in *May 1732*, it was found that *eighteen* of the presbyteries had returned no opinion concerning the overture; that *twelve* were for it, only upon condition of some material amendments: That only *six* were absolutely for it; and that *thirty-one* presbyteries were absolutely against it. At the same time two representations of grievances were offered to the Assembly; one by *forty-two* Ministers*, and another by upwards of *seventeen hundred* Christian people: Both of them remonstrating, among other things, against the aforesaid overture. But the Assembly refused to hear these representations: And notwithstanding the state of the returns from the presbyteries, they turned the overture into a *standing act*,—without any material amendment; refusing to restrict the vote of heritors to such as had a residence within the parish, or to such as were of the communion of the Church of Scotland: Refusing also to take any notice, in their records, first of a *dissent* from this act, and then of a *protest* against it,—by several ministers and elders, members of the Assembly.

III. The Reverend Mr *Ebenezer Erskine*, Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling*, one of these dissenters and protesters,—preached a sermon at the opening of the synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, in *October* that same year: On which occasion, he used the freedom of testifying against some public evils; particularly the aforesaid act of Assembly,—and the proceedings of the church-judicatories, in the violent settlements

* The *four brethren*, mentioned in the next paragraph, were of that number; as also other *four*, who afterwards acceded to them in the Associate Presbytery, viz. The Reverend Messrs *Ralph Erskine* Minister of the Gospel at *Dunfermline*, *Thomas Mair* at *Orwell*, *James Thomson* at *Burntisland*, and *Thomas Nairn* at *Abbotshall*.

lements of Ministers : For which the Synod judged him *cenfurable*, after much debate, by a plurality of fix voices. The Reverend Mr *Alexander Moncrieff*, Minister of the Gospel at *Abernethy*, dissented from and protested against this sentence of the Synod : in which he was adhered unto by the Reverend Mr *William Wilson*, Minister of the Gospel at *Perth* ; and by *ten* other Ministers of the Synod. The Reverend Mr *James Fisher*, Minister of the Gospel at *Kinclaven* (whom the Synod had excluded from voting in the affair relating to Mr *Erskine*, in regard Mr *Erskine* was his father-in-law), did also protest against the sentence ; and appealed to the next Assembly. Mr *Erskine* did likewise protest against that sentence, and appealed to the ensuing General Assembly.—The Synod next determined the censure, to be a *rebuke* and *admonition* at their bar : But neither then, nor at their ensuing meeting in *April*, did they find occasion (through Mr *Erskine's* absence) for executing that censure.

IV. While the Assembly was proceeding upon this cause in *May* 1733, Mr *Wilson* and Mr *Moncrieff* insisted for being heard upon their *reasons of dissent* from the sentence of their own Synod in that affair ; which the Assembly thought fit to refuse : And Mr *Fisher* was precluded from a hearing, by the committee of bills their refusing to transmit his *reasons of appeal*.—The Assembly having considered Mr *Erskine's* appeal, approved the proceedings of the Synod : And they appointed him to be *rebuked* and *admonished* by the Moderator at their own bar, in order to terminate the process ; which was done accordingly.

Mr *Erskine* having immediately declared that he could not submit to the rebuke and admonition ; he offered a paper for himself, and his three brethren above-mentioned, who attended him at the bar,—craving and protesting that the same might be read, and recorded in the minutes of the Assembly. But the Assembly having represented to them the (pretended) irregularity and danger of such a practice, and desired them to withdraw their paper and protest ; they refused to do so, and left it upon the table : The tenor whereof follows.

“ PROTEST

“ **PROTEST** by Mr *Ebenezer Erskine* and others,
 “ given in to the Assembly 1733.

“ Although I have a very great and dutiful regard to
 “ the judicatories of this Church, to whom I own my sub-
 “ jection in the Lord ; yet, in respect the Assembly have
 “ found me censurable, and have tendered a rebuke and
 “ admonition to me, for things I conceive agreeable unto
 “ and founded upon the word of God and our approved
 “ standards : I find myself obliged to protest against the
 “ said censure ; as importing that I have, in my doctrine
 “ at the opening of the Synod of *Perth*, *October* last, de-
 “ parted from the word of God and the foresaid standards :
 “ And that I shall be at liberty to preach the same truths
 “ of God, and to testify against the same or like defecti-
 “ ons of this Church, upon all proper occasions. And I
 “ do hereby adhere unto the testimonies I have formerly
 “ emitted against the act of Assembly 1732 ; whether in
 “ the protest entered against it in open Assembly, or yet
 “ in my synodical sermon : craving this my protest and
 “ declaration to be insert in the records of the Assembly,
 “ and that I may be allowed extracts thereof.

“ *May* 14, 1733.

“ **EBENEZER ERSKINE.**”

“ We undersubscribing Ministers, dissenters from the
 “ sentence of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, do hereby
 “ adhere to the above Protestation and Declaration, con-
 “ taining a testimony against the act of Assembly 1732 ;
 “ and asserting our privilege and duty to testify publicly
 “ against the same or like defections, upon all proper oc-
 “ casions.

“ **WILLIAM WILSON.**

“ **ALEXR. MONCRIEFF.**”

“ I Mr *James Fisher* Minister at *Kinclaven*, appellant
 “ against the sentence of the Synod of *Perth* in this que-
 “ stion, although the Committee of Bills did not think fit
 “ to transmit my reasons of appeal, find myself obliged to
 “ adhere unto the foresaid Protestation and Declaration.

“ **JAMES FISHER.**”

Upon

Upon giving in the above-cited paper, these brethren withdrew *; and were summoned by the Assembly's officer, to compare before them next day. At their comparing, and without any question being put to them, a committee was appointed to deal with them; who soon made report, *That the four brethren continued fully resolved to adhere to their paper and protest*: And immediately, without allowing them to open a mouth at the bar, the Assembly passed the following sentence concerning them.

“ The General Assembly ordains, that the four brethren afore said appear before the Commission in *August* next; and then show their sorrow for their conduct and misbehaviour in offering to protest, and in giving in to this Assembly the paper by them subscribed; and that they then retract the same. And in case they do not appear before the said Commission in *August*, and then show their sorrow and retract as said is; the Commission is hereby impowered and appointed to suspend the said brethren, or such of them as shall not obey, from the
“ exercise

* The writer of this account was present in the said Assembly, particularly intent upon that affair; and observed the matter, according to his best remembrance, at this remarkable pass.—When Mr *Erfkine* had thrown in the paper upon the table, (before the close of the forenoon-sederunt); he and his brethren retired: The paper fell over the table; and the Assembly, without taking any notice of it, proceeded to other business. In this conjuncture, a Minister, who was sitting beside the table, got up the paper: And having looked over it, with an evident kindling in his countenance; he passionately called out for the Assembly to stop, till they should consider the insufferable insult which he reckoned was committed upon them in that paper. It was then read, upon which the Assembly appeared all in a flame; and ordered that their officer should seek out and cite the four brethren to compare before them next forenoon.

The officer got not his orders fulfilled till about an hour before midnight.—And thus, from the time of their leaving the Assembly till they got the summons, (or till they got information of it's being appointed),—these brethren must have concluded the matter to be quite over with the Assembly: And must have had no view of carrying it further on their part, than a continuing to testify against public evils in the way of communion with the established Church; according to the liberty which they had protested for.

“ exercise of their ministry. And further, in case the
 “ said brethren shall be suspended by the said Commission,
 “ and that they shall act contrary to the said sentence of
 “ suspension; the Commission is hereby impowered and
 “ appointed, at their meeting in *November*, or any sub-
 “ sequent meeting, to proceed to a higher censure
 “ against the said four brethren, or such of them as
 “ shall continue to offend by transgressing this act.
 “ And the General Assembly do appoint the several pres-
 “ byteries of which the said brethren are members, to
 “ report to the Commission in *August*, and subsequent
 “ meetings of it, their conduct and behaviour with respect
 “ to this act.”

Upon the intimation of this sentence to them, these brethren offered to read the following complaint and declaration as their joint speech, *viz.* “ In regard the Vene-
 “ rable Assembly have come to a positive sentence, with-
 “ out hearing our defences; and have appointed the
 “ Commission to execute their sentence in *August*, in case
 “ we do not retract what we have done: We cannot but
 “ complain of this uncommon procedure; and declare
 “ that we are not at liberty to take this affair to an *avi-*
 “ *sandum*.*” But as the Assembly would not give them
 a hearing, they left it upon the table under form of in-
 strument †.

V. The four brethren prepared two *Representations*,—
 one by Mr *Erskine* and Mr *Fisher*, as appellants from the
 sentence of the Synod of *Perth*; and another by Mr *Wil-*
son and Mr *Moncrieff*, as protesters against that sentence:
 And they gave in these Representations to the Commission
 in *August* 1733, under form of instrument; insisting upon
 it as their right, to chuse the way of making their de-
 fences by writ. Mr *Erskine* was allowed, after much op-
 position,

* That is,—to take a compliance with the Assembly’s sentence *under consideration*, as to what they were thereby ordained to do.

† The word *instrument* is used to signify the giving of a piece of money, or the piece of money given to the clerk,—for taking in to the process and recording, any paper or protestation or dissent with which it is given in.

position, to read the first of these representations before them : And as the two brethren concerned in the other representation, could not obtain the like allowance ; they delivered the substance of it in speeches at the bar.

These representations contained declarations of their principles ; with their reasons, why they could not make a profession of sorrow for, nor retract the protest which they had given in to the late Assembly. They also contained protestations against any censure that might be inflicted on this account ; and against any intrusion upon their ministerial labours or pastoral charges, in consequence of such censure : But that it should be lawful and warrantable for them, to exercise their ministry as hitherto they had done,—in regard they were not convicted of departing from any of the received principles of the Church of *Scotland*, or of counteracting their ordination vows and engagements ; and that they should not be chargeable with any bad effects that might follow upon the course taken with them.

Several representations were at the same time offered to the Commission, for a delay of procedure against the four brethren, [*viz.* By the presbytery of *Stirling* ; by the kirk-session of *Stirling* ; by the Provost, bailies, and town-council of *Stirling* ; by the kirk-session of *Perth* ; by the Magistrates and town-council of *Perth* ; by the presbytery of *Dumblain* ; and by the presbytery of *Ellon*] : But the Commission would not suffer any of these representations to be read in their presence.

The issue of the matter was, that the Commission *did suspend the four protesting brethren from the exercise of the ministerial function and all the parts thereof* ; several Ministers and Elders, members of the Commission, dissenting from the deed : And this sentence was intimated to them by the Moderator, not in the name and authority of CHRIST ; but in the name and authority of the Assembly and Commission.—Upon this intimation, these brethren gave in the following protestation under form of instrument.

“ WE hereby adhere to the protestations taken by us
 “ before this Court, for ourselves ; and in name of all the
 “ Ministers,

“ Ministers, Elders and members of the Church of Scot-
 “ land, and of all and every one of our respective congre-
 “ gations, adhering to us: Bearing, that this sentence is
 “ in itself *null* and *void*; and that it shall be lawful and
 “ warrantable for us to exercise our ministry as hitherto
 “ we have done, and as if no such censure had been in-
 “ flicted: And that if, in consequence of this sentence,
 “ any Minister or probationer shall exercise any part of
 “ our *pastoral work*; the same shall be held and reputed
 “ as a violent intrusion upon our ministerial labours. And
 “ we do hereby protest for extracts of the papers given
 “ in by us, and of the whole of the Commission’s proce-
 “ dure against us; and hereupon we take instruments.

“ EBENEZER ERSKINE.

“ WILLIAM WILSON.

“ ALEX^R. MONCRIEFF.

“ JAMES FISHER.”

And some Elders from their respective kirk-sessions—
gave in several protestations against the sentence; testifying
their adherence to their Ministers.

VI. When the four brethren compeared before the
Commission in *November 1733*, upon a citation which
they had received at the former meeting; they offered to
read the following *protestation*: But, being interrupted, it
was laid down upon the table with an instrument.

Edinburgh, November 14th, 1733.

“ WE do hereby protest, That our present appearance
 “ before the Commission shall not be construed a falling
 “ from the declarations we emitted, and the protestations
 “ entered, both before and after the executing of the sen-
 “ tence of suspension against us by the Commission at
 “ their meeting in *August* last: To which *Protestations*
 “ and *Representations* given in by us to the said Commis-
 “ sion, we still adhere; and hereupon take instruments.

“ EBENEZER ERSKINE.

“ WILLIAM WILSON.

“ ALEX^R. MONCRIEFF.

“ JAMES FISHER.”

A Com-

A committee which was appointed to deal with them, for retracting their protestation, reported that they had done so without success. And upon being interrogated, about their obedience to the sentence of the Commission in *August*; each of them owned that, agreeably to the protestations which they then made,—*They had exercised all the parts of their ministerial office, as if they had been under no such censure.*

Several applications to the Commission, in behalf of the four brethren, were read; made by the Synods of *Dumfries, Murray, Ross, Angus and Mearns, Perth and Stirling, Galloway, and Fife*,—as also by the presbyteries of *Dornock and Aberdeen*. At the same time, many members of the Commission insisted for a delay of further procedure against them. But it carried, by the casting vote of Mr *John Gowdie* Moderator *, *to proceed immediately to inflict a higher censure upon the four suspended Ministers*: From which sentence, several Ministers and Elders, members of the Commission, *dissented*.—A *Declaration and Protestation*, by Mr *Ralph Erskine* and Mr *Thomas Mair*, who were not members of the Commission,—was lodged with an instrument in the clerk's hands: Bearing a testimony against the proceedings of the Assembly and Commission, in the case of the four brethren; and an adherence to them in that cause.

After some further dealing with them by a committee, who reported—that *they had declared their resolution to continue of the same mind as formerly*; the Commission agreed upon the state of a question,—about *loosing* the relation of the said four Ministers to their several charges, or *deposing* them *simpliciter*: And it carried *loose*, by a great plurality; as a great many members of the Commission had not freedom to vote on either side of the question. Accordingly, on the 16th of *November*, the Commission passed their final sentence against the four protesting Ministers; as follows.

VOL. I.

E

“ The

* A motion was made at the next diet, to have it marked in the minutes, that this sentence carried *only by the Moderator's casting vote*: But this was refused, the motion being vigorously opposed by the *Moderator himself* and some others; against which refusal, some members of the Commission protested,

“ The Commission of the General Assembly did, and
 “ hereby do loose the relation of Mr *Ebenezer Erskine*
 “ Minister at *Stirling*, Mr *William Wilson* Minister at
 “ *Perth*, Mr *Alexander Moncrieff* Minister at *Abernethy*,
 “ and Mr *James Fisher* Minister at *Kinclaven*, to their
 “ said respective charges ; and do declare them no longer
 “ Ministers of this Church : And do hereby prohibit all
 “ Ministers of this Church to employ them, or any of
 “ them, in any ministerial function. And the Commis-
 “ sion do declare the Churches of the said Mr *Erskine*,
 “ Mr *Wilson*, Mr *Moncrieff* and Mr *Fisher*, vacant from
 “ and after the date of this sentence : And appoints that
 “ letters from the Moderator, and extracts of this sen-
 “ tence, be sent to the several presbyteries within whose
 “ bounds the said Ministers have had their charges ; ap-
 “ pointing them, as they are hereby appointed, to cause
 “ intimate this sentence in the foresaid several Churches,
 “ any time betwixt and the first of *January* next : And
 “ also, that notice of this sentence be sent, by letters
 “ from the Moderator of this Commission, to the Magi-
 “ strates of *Perth* and *Stirling*, to the Sheriff-principal of
 “ *Perth*, and Bailie of the regality of *Abernethy*.”

Upon the passing of this sentence, a written *Protestation*
 was given in against it, by seven Ministers ; among whom
 were the afore-mentioned Mr *Ralph Erskine*, Mr *Thomas*
Mair,—and Mr *Thomas Nairn*.

When the sentence was intimated to the four brethren,
 they read the following *Protestation* ; and then gave it in
 to the clerk, with an instrument taken thereupon by every
 one of them.

“ *Edinburgh, November 16th, 1733.*

“ WE hereby adhere to the protestation formerly en-
 “ tered before this Court ; both at their last meeting in
 “ *August*, and when we appeared first before this meet-
 “ ing. And further, we do protest in our own name, and
 “ in the name of all and every one in our respective con-
 “ gregations adhering to us ; that, notwithstanding of this
 “ sentence, passed against us, our pastoral relation shall
 “ be held and reputed firm and valid. And likewise we
 “ protest, That, notwithstanding of our being cast out
 “ from

“ from ministerial communion with the established Church
“ of *Scotland*; we still hold communion with all and every
“ one who desire, with us, to adhere to the principles
“ of the true presbyterian, covenanted Church of *Scotland*,
“ in her doctrine, worship, government and discipline:
“ And particularly with every one who are groaning under
“ the evils, and who are affected with the grievances
“ we have been complaining of; who are, in their several
“ spheres, wrestling against the same*. But, in regard
“ the *prevailing party* in this established Church, who
“ have now cast us out from ministerial communion with
“ them, are carrying on a course of defection from our
“ reformed and covenanted principles; and particularly
“ are suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in
“ testifying against the present backslidings of the Church,
“ and inflicting censures upon Ministers for witnessing,
“ by protestations and otherwise, against the same: Therefore
“ we do, for these and many other weighty reasons,
“ to be laid open in due time, protest that we are obliged
“ to make a *SECESSION from them*; and that we can have
“ no ministerial communion with them, till they see their
“ sins and mistakes, and amend them. And in like
“ manner we do protest, That it shall be lawful and
“ warrantable for us to exercise the keys of doctrine, discipline
“ and government, according to the word of God,
“ and Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitutions
“ of the covenanted Church of *Scotland*; as if no
“ such censure had been passed upon us: Upon all which
“ we take instruments. And we hereby appeal unto the
“ first free, faithful and reforming General Assembly of
“ the Church of *Scotland*.

“ EBENEZER ERSKINE.

“ WILLIAM WILSON.

“ ALEX^R. MONCRIEFF.

“ JAMES FISHER.”

VII. Upon

* Ministerial communion was maintained, betwixt these four brethren and several Ministers of the established Church, for some years,—till it gradually ceased, betwixt the publication of the *Judicial Testimony* and the *Declinature*.

VII. Upon the sixth day of *December* that year, the four brethren did constitute themselves into a *Presbytery* (afterwards known by the name of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY), at *Gairney-bridge* near *Kinross*; after having spent the precedent, and the most part of that day, in prayer and conference: Mr *Ralph Erskine* and Mr *Thomas Mair* being then present with them.

This step they took, in conformity to their present situation,—and in consequence of their late *protestation* before the Commission; as also for the following reasons: That they might be in a condition and capacity to exercise all the parts of their pastoral office; that they might have a more special claim to the promise of the divine presence among them; that they might maintain proper order among themselves, distinguishing themselves from those of the *sectarian* and *independent* way; that they might be in a better capacity for affording help and relief to the oppressed heritage of God through the land;—and that they might endeavour to lift up a *judicial* as well as a doctrinal testimony for *Scotland's* covenanted Reformation; and against the present declinings and backslidings from the same.

VIII. A committee of their number, appointed for that purpose, composed,—and published in *March* next year, [A REVIEW of the *narrative* and *state* of the proceedings of the judicatories against (them), emitted by a committee of the Commission of the General Assembly: Wherein the reasonings of the said *narrative* are examined, and the representation that is made of the proceedings of the judicatories enquired into].

In this *Review* they say,—“ Our ordination-vows and engagements oblige us to the several steps we have taken*.—Our submission to judicatories is according to
“ the

* They had said,—“ We are indeed bound, at our ordination, to subject ourselves unto the judicatories of the Church; but it is not an *absolute subjection* that we engage unto: It is not a *blind and implicit obedience* that we bind ourselves unto, but a *subjection in the Lord*; a *subjection qualified and limited* by the word of God, and the received and known principles of this Church.” *Representations*, p. 38.
—Thus they justly conceived that their obligation, by their ordination-vows,

“ the word of God ; and our received and approved standards of doctrine, worship, government and discipline :
“ These are the only terms of ministerial communion amongst us ; and we refuse that we have broken through any of them.”—“ We have continued in ministerial communion with what is reckoned the established Church, till the prevailing party have declared that they will not allow us any longer ministerial communion with them.—The prevailing party have now declared, That they will allow none to continue in ministerial communion with them, who shall testify, either doctrinally from the pulpit or by protestation in the supreme judicatory, against their sinful and unwarrantable proceedings.”—“ We have made a secession from the *prevailing party*,” (whom they described in their next publication, to be “ a party who have got the management in their hands, and who have got the majority on their side in the judicatories, particularly in our Assemblies and Commissions), who are carrying on the course of defection.”—“ Our secession is not from the Church of *Scotland* : We own her doctrine, contained in her Confession of Faith ; we observe the received and approved uniformity of worship ; we adhere unto her presbyterian government and discipline, according unto the word of God, and our solemn covenant-engagements ;—and we have not been convicted of any thing in doctrine or practice to the contrary.”

IX. A committee of their number, appointed for that purpose, composed,—and published in *May* following, [A TESTIMONY to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church of *Scotland* : Or, *Reasons* by (the four brethren) for their *protestation* entered before the Commission of the General Assembly, *November* 1733 ; upon the intimation of a sentence of the said Commission, loosening their relation to their respective parishes] : Which
Testimony

tion-vows, to maintain communion with the established Church,—was subordinate to their obligation, by these vows, for maintaining the Reformation-principles : So that the same vows, which did formerly bind them to communion with the established Church,—did now bind them to *secession* from her ; when they could no longer get themselves exonerated with respect to these principles, in a way of communion with her.

Testimony being read all over in presbytery, about six months after the publication of it; they caused to be marked in their minutes—an *approbation* of it as *their Testimony*, and as *seasonably published*.—This was afterwards called the *first* and *extra-judicial* Testimony.

This Testimony contained some *historical observes* on the state of the Church of Scotland, both in her reforming and declining periods: *Reasons* by the protesting Ministers, for their *secession* from the prevailing party in the established Church: *Reasons* for the *validity* of their *pastoral relation* to their respective congregations: And reasons for their exercising the *keys of government and discipline*, according to their protestation entered before the Commission.

The special design of it was, to give *reasons* for their *secession*; and these were generally as follows.

1. That the prevailing party were *breaking down our beautiful presbyterian constitution*: In so much as they had broken down the fences and guards which former General Assemblies had wisely set up, against innovations*;—and had usurped a legislative power and authority over the House of God, in making laws and constitutions that not only have no manner of warrant from the word, but are contrary unto it; and were exercising a lordly and magisterial power over the flock and heritage of God, in binding their decrees upon the consciences of the members of the Church,—by threatening and actually inflicting the highest censures of the Church upon them, if they did not submit to their arbitrary impositions; while the General Assemblies were also supporting the unwarrantable and arbitrary proceedings of their Commissions, in the violent intrusions of Ministers upon congregations.

2. That they were pursuing such measures as did *actually corrupt*, or had the most direct *tendency to corrupt* the doctrine

* It had been provided by the Assemblies in the years 1639,—1695, and 1697; That acts which were to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church, should be first transmitted as *overtures* to the several presbyteries,—and not passed afterwards, without the more general opinion of the Church agreeing thereunto. But, in opposition to this, the act 1732 was passed against the more general opinion of the Church: And an act 1730 (to be mentioned afterwards) was passed, without ever transmitting the same to the several presbyteries—as an overture.

doctrine contained in our excellent Confession of Faith : Particularly with regard to the cases of Mr *Simson* and Mr *Campbell*.

3. That *sinful* and *unwarrantable* terms of ministerial communion—were imposed ; by restraining ministerial freedom and faithfulness, in testifying against the present course of defection and backsliding.

4. That these corrupt courses were carried on *with a high hand* ; notwithstanding that the ordinary means had been used to reclaim them, and to stop the current of the present defection : Instructions, representations and petitions,—from synods, presbyteries, and particular Ministers,—having been disregarded.

5. That matters were come to such a pass in this Church, that they were *excluded* from keeping up a proper testimony against the corruptions and backslidings of the prevailing party, in a way of ministerial communion with them : As not only had instructions, representations and petitions been disregarded ; but both *doctrinal* and *judicial* testifying against these corruptions and backslidings, had come to be condemned in their case,—and they *cast out* on this account.—“ Therefore (said they) it is not only
“ *warrantable* for us, but we are laid under a *necessity*,
“ to lift up a testimony in a way of *secession* from them,
“ and against the present current of defection,—that *we*
“ *may not partake with them in their sins* ; and may do
“ what in us lies to transmit unto succeeding generations,
“ these valuable truths that have been handed down to
“ us, by the contendings and wrestlings of a great cloud
“ of witnesses in *Scotland*, since the dawning of Reformation-light amongst us.”

These reasons being severally enlarged upon, so as to be made good by particular instances,—were confirmed by several passages of Scripture * : And the whole was summed up as follows.

“ Seeing the prevailing party in the established Church
“ are *breaking down* the necessary fences and guards upon
“ our

* Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Theff. iii. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Tit. iii. 10. 2 John. ver. 10.—Jer. vi. 16. Prov. xxiv. 21. Gal. v. 1. Jude ver. 3. Rev. iii. 10. Jer. xv. 19.

“ our doctrine, worship, government and discipline : See-
 “ ing they exercise a *legislative power* and authority over
 “ the House of God ; by enacting laws *inconsistent* with
 “ the laws of Christ, to the hurt, and not the edification of
 “ his body: Seeing the prevailing party, by the act 1732,
 “ and commonly in all the settlements of Christian con-
 “ gregations, *join themselves* to the *avowed enemies* of a
 “ presbyterian interest, who are suppressing the true
 “ friends thereof: Seeing a *lordly* and *magisterial* power
 “ is exercised over the flock of Christ, which he *gathers*
 “ *with his arm* and carries with the greatest tenderness
 “ *in his bosom* ; by inflicting the highest censures of the
 “ Church upon the people of these congregations who
 “ cannot submit to the ministry of such as are intruded
 “ upon them, and by threatening to inflict the highest
 “ censures upon Ministers who dispense sealing ordi-
 “ nances unto them: Seeing Church-discipline is exer-
 “ cised after this manner, so as to screen such as are justly
 “ censurable, and to *censure* men for the *faithful discharge*
 “ *of their duty*: And seeing prelatie dominion and ty-
 “ ranny has crept in, and is carried on,—by divesting
 “ presbyteries of their inherent right and privilege, if
 “ they cannot concur in the violent settlement of congre-
 “ gations ; and *committees* are appointed with a presby-
 “ terial power, to intrude Ministers upon dissenting and
 “ reclaiming congregations ; and presbyteries are appoint-
 “ ed to receive and inroll such intruded Ministers a-
 “ mongst their members ; by all which proceedings, our
 “ *presbyterian constitution is subverted*: Seeing also the
 “ *prevailing party*, instead of *contending for the faith once*
 “ *delivered to the saints*, or the purity of doctrine, suffer
 “ error to be published without any notice taken there-
 “ of: Seeing no due and adequate censure has been
 “ inflicted upon erroneous teachers ; yea, seeing such are
 “ held and kept in ministerial communion with the esta-
 “ blished Church : Seeing the *prevailing party* have *alter-*
 “ *ed* the terms of ministerial communion ; by making e-
 “ very man liable to censure, who adventures to preach
 “ against their present defections : Seeing they have *cast*
 “ *out* thousands from communion with the Church in her
 “ sealing ordinances, who cannot join with *intruded hire-*
 “ *lings* :

“ *lings*: And seeing these who are intruded into the Mini-
 “ stry, and who are very active in carrying on the present
 “ defections, though in the mean time they have no law-
 “ ful call to act as Ministers of this Church, make up
 “ such a *considerable part* of her judicatories: And seeing,
 “ to crown all, the *Assemblies* of this Church are become
 “ so *arbitrary* in their proceedings of late, as to have no
 “ regard to instructions, petitions and representations a-
 “ gainst a course of defection; but on the contrary do
 “ commence processes, do rebuke, admonish, suspend,
 “ and threaten higher censures upon Ministers who *preach*
 “ and *protest* against the above defections: And since
 “ *Ministers* are not only *suspended*, but *cast out* from mi-
 “ nisterial communion by the *prevailing party* in the esta-
 “ blished Church; *merely for protesting for their just rights*
 “ *and privileges to testify against these and the like defec-*
 “ *tions*; and because they refuse to *retract* their said *pro-*
 “ *testations*, or submit to a mere *authoritative suspension*
 “ for their *Testimony* in a cause of *public concern*:—We
 “ do then upon the whole conceive, that although we
 “ have hitherto continued contending and wrestling in a
 “ way of church-communion with our brethren; yet now,
 “ finding that there is no stop put to the backsliding mea-
 “ sures, and that the current of defection runs with such
 “ an impetuous torrent; and that we are excluded from
 “ keeping up a testimony against their many sinful and
 “ unwarrantable proceedings in a way of church-commu-
 “ nion with them: Therefore, we judge it our duty to
 “ make a *secession from ministerial communion with the pre-*
 “ *sent prevailing party in the established Church*; till they
 “ *are sensible of their above-mentioned sins and mistakes,*
 “ *and reform and amend the same.*”

X. The public evils, against which the four brethren
 had hitherto been bearing a particular testimony, (expressed
 and enlarged upon in the *True State of the Process*,—the
Representations, the *Review of the Narrative*, and the *First*
Testimony),—were these following.

1. The act of Assembly 1732, concerning the method
 of planting vacant churches.—Against this act (as at
 first the main ground of their Testimony), they pleaded;
 that an *ecclesiastical* trust and privilege was thereby put in-

to the hands of heritors *as such*: That this valuable trust was committed to such heritors as were, not only open and declared enemies to our excellent presbyterian constitution, but disaffected to the protestant succession in the illustrious family of *Hanover*: That heritors, if they bore the name of Protestant, without any other qualification,—though Deists, Arians, Socinians, Arminians, declared enemies to our covenanted Reformation, disaffected to the government in Church and State, and in practice profane and scandalous,—were thereby received into the bosom of the Church, and intrusted with one of her most sacred and valuable rights and privileges; in that great affair of electing Ministers, which relates to the eternal salvation of souls,—and is a principal thing in the external administration of the kingdom of Christ in this world:—That, according to the said act, if the heritors were more numerous than the elders, whether they had their residence in the parish or not, whether they were of the communion of the Church of *Scotland* or not,—they might impose a Minister upon a congregation, though all the elders and people were dissenting and reclaiming; and though all the residing heritors were also reclaiming, if the non-residing heritors were supernumerary to the residing heritors and elders: That a power was thus put into the hands of such as were disaffected to our most valuable interests and privileges, to impose Ministers on all the congregations in *Scotland* where they had the ascendant; while it was frequently the case, that the disaffected heritors were supernumerary to the well-affected heritors and elders:—And that the said act opened a door for the entry of a corrupt Ministry into the Church, as wide as even the patronage-act itself.

2. The violent settlements of Ministers then taking place, through all the corners of this Church:—That the judicatories, particularly the General Assemblies and their Commissions, were filled with such as had been intruded into congregations themselves, or who were the avowed and declared supporters and abettors of violent intrusions: That, accordingly, Ministers were not only intruded through the land, in consequence of the act 1732; but also the patronage-act was much homologated, in the settlement

settlement of Ministers on the foot of presentations, without the call and consent of the people of the congregations concerned : That by such violent intrusions, the great end and design of a Gospel-Ministry, in the edification of souls, was defeated ; innumerable divisions and convulsions in the body of Christ, were occasioned ; the spirits of the godly grieved, and their affections alienated ; the peace and unity of the Church broken and ruined ; the heritage and flock of Christ wounded, scattered and broken ; and the cry of violence and oppression was becoming still louder and louder, from all corners of the land : That such violent settlements were carried on, in opposition to the declared minds of the presbyteries of the bounds ; by committees of the Commission, or correspondents appointed from other presbyteries, vested with a presbyterial power to try and ordain men for the office of the holy Ministry ;—the Commissions thereby depriving presbyteries of their inherent right and privilege, when they could not concur with them in intruding Ministers upon the congregations concerned ; and for this purpose erecting a Court with a power of mission unto the work and office of the Ministry, that had no manner of foundation in the word of God : And that these unwarrantable and arbitrary proceedings of the Commission, for some years by-past,—had been supported and countenanced by the prevailing party in the General Assemblies.

3. The arbitrary and tyrannical measures by which the most violent settlements had been enforced :—That presbyteries, refusing to inroll those intruded upon congregations, were threatened with the highest censures of the Church : That neighbouring Ministers were discharged, under the same penalty, from admitting to sealing ordinances,—the people groaning under the load of such settlements, who could not submit to the ministry of intruders ; according to an act of Assembly in *May 1733*, concerning the Ministers of the presbytery of *Dunfermline* : And that thus it was made a term of Christian communion amongst the members of this Church,—That they should *submit* to and *own* the ministry of such as were intruded into the Lord's vineyard, upon the pain of excommunication from sealing ordinances.

4. The

4. The decisions of the Assembly 1733, concerning Mr *Erskine* and his three brethren : That thereby *new terms* of ministerial communion were fixed, among all the Ministers of the Church ;—that Ministers should not testify from the pulpit against the act of Assembly 1732, or any other sinful and unwarrantable proceedings of the judicatories of this Church, or the violent settlements of Ministers which were become so frequent ; and that none of their members should ever *protest* against any of their proceedings.

5. The procedure of the General Assembly, in the years 1728 and 1729, concerning Mr *John Simson* Professor of Divinity at *Glasgow* ;—in passing no higher censure against him, for his *Arian* heresy, than that of a *bare suspension*,—leaving the door open for another Assembly to relax him from the same ; and in taking no notice of other *gross* and *pernicious errors*, which had been found proven against him : And that they continued to refuse the passing of an *assertory act*, affirming and owning the truths injured and opposed by him ; or a *solemn warning* against his dangerous errors :—Which matters were more particularly explained afterwards, in the *Judicial Testimony*.

6. The case of Mr *Archibald Campbell*, Professor of Church-History at *St Andrews* : That though he had vented a *scheme* of *erroneous principles*, in some books published by him, of a most pernicious tendency ; yet, instead of commencing any process against him, he was carested and countenanced in the Assemblies,—as being a fit man for the purpose of the ruling side, who were carrying on the course of defection :—Which matter was also more particularly explained afterwards, in the *Judicial Testimony*.

7. The act of the Assembly 1730 ; by which they discharged the *recording* of *reasons of dissent* against the determinations of church-judicatories : Done with a design to bury all faithful testimonies against the backslidings of this Church—in oblivion.

They were also bearing witness against the prevalence of a *corrupt* and *unsound Ministry* : Against the dangerous *innovation*, both in the *method* and *strain* of preaching ;
while

while as little of Christ was to be found in most of the discourses of many Ministers and preachers, as in the moral writings of heathen philosophers; supernatural mysteries being in a great measure exploded and discarded by the *modish haranguers*,—so that many were left to perill for lack of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of the way of salvation by Christ in a new covenant: Against the want of due *caution* and *tenderness*, in the *licensing of young men* as probationers for the holy Ministry: And against the *neglect* of solemn *national fasting* and *humiliation* for many years by-past, amidst an universal degeneracy both in principle and practice through the land; while it could not be obtained, though the necessity of it had been represented from year to year, by presbyteries, to our national Assemblies.—Moreover, in the *historical observes* of the first Testimony, there was a general witness-bearing against many other public evils; from the last period of Reformation, down to the accession of the *Hanover-family*: Which came to be more particularly stated afterwards, in the *Judicial Testimony*

It remains to be considered here,—*how far* and in *what respect* the several evils against which they did now, or afterwards, bear a particular testimony,—were held by them for *reasons* or *grounds* of their *secession*.—And it is evident, that they did not take either *all* or *any* of those evils, absolutely or in themselves considered, for grounds of their secession: Because they still satisfied themselves with testifying in a way of communion; till matters were come to this pass, by the procedure of the Commission in *November 1733*,—that they were “excluded from keeping up a proper testimony against the defections and backslidings of the prevailing party, in a way of ministerial communion with them.” Their secession, therefore, did not proceed upon these evils absolutely considered; but considered as evils against which they were no longer allowed to maintain a proper testimony in a way of communion: Matters being then at such a pass, that the testimony was either to be altogether dropt, or kept up in a way of secession.—And their protestation before the Commission in *November 1733*, did make their secession to turn, in the first place, upon this general ground; That the

the prevailing party were *carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles*: So that all public evils, of older or later date, really belonging to that *course of defection*, as still *carried on*,—must really belong to the *grounds of their secession*; considered as evils against which no proper testimony could then take place in a way of communion. Accordingly, though their secession was more immediately laid upon some acts and proceedings of the Assembly and Commission 1733, as restraining ministerial freedom; yet they did not confine the reasons of it, as laid out in the first Testimony, to these particular acts and proceedings;—nor to those evils about which they had been explicitly contending with the judicatories, in the course of the process against them: For some public evils there insisted on as reasons of their secession, particularly the last two of the seven articles above-mentioned,—were what they had not mentioned in the course of that process; or sooner than in the said Testimony after the secession was made.—Wherefore, all public evils, of former as well as present times,—against which they were then bearing witness, or came afterwards to bear witness in an enlargement of their Testimony,—were all in the same sense grounds of their secession: That is, considered as evils against which they found themselves obliged to bear testimony; and against which they could find no longer access to bear testimony, in a way of communion with the established Church*.

XI. Matters

* There may certainly be such public evils in a Church, as are in themselves sufficient reasons of secession,—making it warrantable and necessary, upon the ground of these evils absolutely considered; whatever liberty particular Ministers might be left at, as to testifying against the same in a way of communion with her,—while she refuses to be reformed. How far this was then, or is now the case with the established Church of Scotland, belongs not to the present question: For the secession of the four brethren was not of that general nature.—It was of a special nature; while it proceeded upon the public evils taking place, only as they had then come to be clothed with this aggravating qualification,—that a Testimony could no longer be got maintained against them in a way of communion. And in this view, there is no room left for distinguishing betwixt the *grounds of the Secession*,—and *all the public evils* (complexly taken) then or afterwards testified against; these being all the same, according to the special nature of this Secession.—

But

XI. Matters being in the situation which has been represented, when the General Assembly met in *May 1734*; they rescinded the act 1730, about reasons of dissent,—and also the act 1732, concerning the method of planting vacant churches: Both for the same reason; “Because they were not made according to former acts” (about innovations), “and were found to be hurtful to this Church.” They likewise passed an act, in behalf of what they reckoned *due and regular ministerial freedom*.—At the same time, they passed an act concerning the four brethren; whereby (“without further enquiring into the occasions or steps of proceeding, either on the part of the said brethren, or by the several judicatories under whose consideration their case hath been”) they empowered the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, to restore these brethren to their respective ministerial charges, uniting them to the communion of the established Church: “But with this express direction, That the said Synod shall not take upon them to judge of the legality or formality of the former proceedings of the church-judicatories in relation to this affair; or either to approve or censure the same.”—And accordingly, in *July* following, the said Synod, as in the place of the General Assembly, “did take off the sentences pronounced by the Commission of the General Assembly 1733 against the foresaid four brethren, declaring the same of no force or effect for the future;” and so did “unite and restore them to ministerial communion with this Church, to their several charges, and to the exercise of all parts of the ministerial function therein.”

XII. A publication was made, in *May 1735*,—of [REASONS by (the four seceding Ministers), why they have not *acceded* to the judicatories of the established Church]. This was in consequence of their “having frequently met, to consider what was their duty in the present juncture:” And the general design of that performance was expressed by them in the following manner,
viz.

But while public evils were laid out, in the first Testimony, as grounds of *Secession*; they were afterwards laid out, in the Judicial Testimony, as grounds of *the Lord's controversy*,—to be mourned over, in bearing witness against the same.

viz. “ When matters were come to such a pass, that we
 “ were excluded from keeping up a proper testimony a-
 “ gainst the defections and backslidings of the prevailing
 “ party, in a way of ministerial communion with them;
 “ we judged it our necessary duty, for this and other rea-
 “ sons (published in our Testimony), to make a *secession*
 “ from the judicatories of the established Church: And
 “ since the Lord, in his adorable providence, permitted
 “ the judicatories to thrust us out, at a time when a course
 “ of defection was carried on with a high hand; it will
 “ therefore be necessary, for the vindication of our pre-
 “ sent conduct,—to enquire if the Assembly 1734 have at
 “ least so far removed the grounds of our secession, that
 “ we may, in a consistency with the Testimony we have
 “ emitted, *accede* unto the judicatories of the Church, and
 “ join in ministerial communion with them.”

The result of this enquiry was,—That though they owned some part of the grounds of their secession to be removed, by the repeal of the fore said acts 1730 and 1732; yet they found the *principal grounds* of it remaining,—unremoved, yea rather aggravated by the Assembly 1734: So that they could not accede to the judicatories in a consistency with, or without falling from the testimony they had given.

More particularly, they found that the act 1732 was reversed,—in a way of abstracting from any acknowledgement of its inconsistency with and contrariety to the word of God: That though the Assembly 1734 did not countenance any violent intrusions themselves, but shewed a disposition to redress grievances of this nature that came regularly before them; yet there was not a sufficient testimony given against the manifest intrusions that had been made in many congregations of this Church;—as there was no confession made of the great sin of the judicatories, in licensing so many to preach the Gospel who seemed to be ashamed of Christ and him crucified; and then imposing and violently obtruding them on God’s heritage through the land: That the act 1734, for restoring them,—did not proceed upon the consideration of the sinfulness and injustice of the sentences passed against them by the Assembly and Commission 1733; but only upon the considera-
 tion

tion of the (supposed) lamentable consequences that followed or might follow upon (what was called) the separation of the four brethren ;—so that these sentences were left to be constructed of as (in themselves) legal, formal, and valid still,—for being imitated as lawful precedents, where such consequences might not be apprehended ; and thus they were still considered as criminals, favoured with a relaxation of these just sentences for peace-sake : That the said act 1734 plainly insinuated,—as if the matters in controversy between the judicatories and them, were only smaller and trifling matters ; and as if they were the disturbers of the peace of the Church, the authors of divisions and animosities : And that the act 1734, concerning ministerial freedom, seemed to be a plain vindication of all the restraint which had been laid upon it by the act 1733 concerning them ; because this act 1734 declares,—That *due* and *regular* ministerial freedom *was not* anywise impaired or restrained by the said act of Assembly 1733.

These reasons of *Non-accession* were accompanied with a proposal of some things,—as what would have removed difficulties out of the way of their acceding to the judicatories ; and these things were, in substance, as follows, *viz.* That there should be a seasonable warning, against the infidelity and gross errors prevailing ; a proper assertion of the truth, in opposition to Mr *Simson's* Arian heresy ; an express condemnation of his other gross and dangerous errors ;—an inflicting of the highest censure of the Church upon *William Nimmo*, for the bold and daring attack upon the whole of divine Revelation found proven against him ; and an inflicting of the same censure upon Mr *Campbell* (whose writings were then under the consideration of a committee of the Commission), and Mr *Wallace* one of the Ministers of *Edinburgh*, for gross and pernicious errors vented by them,—upon these errors being found proven against them : That the act of Assembly 1733, concerning Mr *Erskine* and his three brethren, should be rescinded,—and all that had followed thereupon declared null and void in itself ; and Ministers enjoined to give faithful warning against the prevailing corruptions of the times : That the act of Assembly 1733, concerning some

VOL. I. G brethren

brethren in the presbytery of *Dunfermline*, should be also rescinded; and Ministers declared at freedom to dispense sealing ordinances to such as could not submit to the ministry of intruders: That the acceptance of presentations should be declared contrary to the principles of this Church; probationers accepting of them, to be deprived of their licence; Ministers, for such a transgression, to be suspended,—and, if tenaciously adhering, deposed;—and an act passed against any settlement in time coming, without the call and consent of the majority of the congregation, who are admitted to full communion with the Church in all her sealing ordinances: That all presbyteries should be strictly enjoined, to use due caution and tenderness in the licensing of young men; and an act be passed against the dangerous innovation, both in the method and strain of preaching: And that, in the grounds of a national fast, there should be an acknowledgment of the great guilt of this land, in having gone on into such a course of backsliding, contrary to the word of God,—and to the obligations these lands are under to promote reformation, by our covenants national and solemn league; with a full and particular enumeration of the steps of defection made in our day.

However, they did not propose these things as containing all that they wanted, in the matter of reformation: But, said they,—“ If the above things were done, we
 “ might have the comfortable prospect of a pleasant and
 “ desirable unity and harmony with our brethren; in
 “ concurring with them, according to our weak measure,
 “ in all other necessary steps toward a further reformation.”

P E R I O D II.

The STATE of the Secession-Testimony.

ACCORDING to the view which is already given, the *Secession-Testimony* had a gradual and advancing RISE, among the hands of the four brethren; in the personal way of their contending with the judicatories, and of their accounting for their own conduct. But there came to be an enlargement of that Testimony, in a public or *judicial*
 STATE

STATE of it;—as a banner displayed for the Truth; or as a standard set up, for gathering and uniting the friends of our covenanted Reformation.

This *State* of the Testimony consists, in general, of *five STEPS*,—which were gradually made or taken by the *Associate Presbytery*, (*viz.* The *Judicial Testimony*, the *Declination*, the act concerning the *doctrine of grace*, the act for *renewing our covenants*; and the answers to Mr *Nairn*, with the *declaration* and *defence* subjoined): And these are now to be severally represented.

S T E P I.

The JUDICIAL TESTIMONY.

THE four associate Ministers held *eleven* presbyterial meetings, “mainly for asking counsel of the Lord;” and for mutual advice in their present situation, and for “strengthening one another’s hands in the way and work of the Lord.” At their *twelfth* presbyterial meeting, on the 21st day of *August* 1735, (having spent the preceding day in fasting and prayer),—they *resolved* to proceed to *acts of jurisdiction*: And, at the same time, they appointed a committee of their number to prepare a draught of the *Judicial Testimony*; tracing the defections of this Church as far back as the year 1650. This draught, after spending many sederunts upon it, with diets of fasting and prayer,—was approved of and *enacted* at their *twenty-fourth* presbyterial meeting in *December* 1736*.

Their *reasons* for enacting and emitting this Testimony, were to the following effect, *viz.* That neither had the iniquities and backslidings of former times been ever particularly acknowledged or condemned, nor had the Reformation and Testimony formerly attained to been ever judicially approven and justified, by the judicatories of this Church since the Revolution: That no banner was judicially displayed for Truth, and against the prevailing evils of the present time: That a judicial Testimony appeared

* Upon the 18th of *February* 1737, Messrs *Thomas Mair* and *Ralph Erskine* laid copies before the Associate Presbytery,—of papers of *secession*, which they had given in to their presbytery of *Dunfermline* on the 16th of that month; with declarations of adherence to the Judicial Testimony, as what they had perused,—and of *accession* to this presbytery. They were accordingly received to a seat in it: And as that Testimony was then a-printing, these papers were published along with it.

peared necessary for the glory of God, for the information and conviction of the present generation ; and for the information of posterity, in having the truth transmitted to them with a suitable Testimony thereunto : That the Lord was calling them, by their peculiar situation in adorable providence, to lift up the standard of a Judicial Testimony for the truths of God ; and against a course of backsliding from the same : That the world might see, by such an open confession of their principles, what they owned and acknowledged ; and upon what foundation they desired, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, to stand :—And that they might thus fulfil their ministry, according to their *ordination-vows* : And according to the obligation which they, as well as the whole land, were under, by *solemn oath*, to the most high God ; “ That we shall sincerely, really and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of *Scotland* ; in doctrine, worship, discipline and government ; ” —and that we shall not “ give ourselves to a detestable indifference or neutrality in this cause,—but shall, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein.”

Accordingly, this *Testimony* was published (with an *Introduction*) in *March 1737* : The tenor whereof follows.

A C T,

[*N. B.* It is only in the present Display, that this Testimony is divided into several parts, (*viz. Preamble, Chapters, Sections, Articles, and Conclusion*),—with distinguishing *titles* ; being all one continued piece under the general title,—as emitted by the Associate Presbytery. And here also, the *places of Scripture* referred to are mostly marked at the foot of the page ; and sometimes the places of our *Confession* and *Catechisms* : These being all in the body of it ; as formerly published in a separate pamphlet, through various editions. Moreover, a few explanatory notes are added.

Above two hundred errors of *words* and *figures*, beside many of *letters*,—and above an hundred omissions of *words*, yea sometimes of whole *lines* ; have crept into the last edition 1770 : But these are carefully corrected here ; from the *first* edition in the year 1737, and a *manuscript* copy which belonged to the Associate Presbytery. —At the same time, by correcting improprieties of pointing and printing,—both the *sentences* and *paragraphs* are all along much *shorter* here, than in any former edition ; which will be found of great advantage, for an easy reading and understanding of it.]

ACT, DECLARATION AND TESTIMONY:

FOR THE

DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, DISCIPLINE, and GOVERNMENT
of the Church of *Scotland*; agreeable to the word of
God, the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant
of *Scotland*, and the Solemn League and Covenant of
the three Nations :

AND AGAINST

Several STEPS of DEFECTION from the same, both in
former and present Times.

By some *Ministers*, associate together for the exercise of Church-
government and discipline in a Presbyterial capacity.

P R E A M B L E.

AT *Perth*, the third day of *December*, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six years. Which day and place the Presbytery being met; and taking into their serious consideration the low state of religion at this day,—the manifold defections and backslidings of all ranks, both in former and present times, from the truths of God and the precious ordinances and institutions of Jesus Christ, delivered as a valuable trust unto his Church and people in this nation; and to the maintenance and preservation of which, the whole land stands indispensibly bound and obliged, by the most solemn covenant-engagements: And especially, considering the present growth and spreading
of

of dangerous and pernicious errors, and the many injuries that are done to the government and discipline of the House of God amongst us ; together with the abounding sin, wickedness and profaneness of the present generation, —and the deep security and general stupidity that prevails, under our national sins and spiritual judgments ; by all which God is highly dishonoured and provoked, his sanctuary profaned, the kingdom of his Son undermined, and the whole land involved in the dreadful guilt of apostasy from the Lord :—I therefore this *Presbytery* find themselves bound in duty, to cast in their *mite* of a *Testimony* to the many great and wonderful appearances of the Lord for this Church and land ; and to the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Lord's House therein,—agreeable to the holy Scriptures, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the national Covenant of *Scotland*, and the solemn League and Covenant of the three nations : As also against the injuries and insolent indignities done unto, and the encroachments, violations and breaches made upon the same.

To this they reckon they are warranted, from the practice and example of the Church and people of God recorded in Scripture ; who very often commemorate the remarkable appearances made for them, the signal deliverances they met with,—together with their own deep ingratitude and heinous provocations, both of an older and later date : And also from the practice and example of this Church in former times. And likewise they judge a Testimony of this kind necessary, for the information of the present generation,—who have generally lost the knowledge, both of what God hath done for *Scotland*, and of the grounds and causes of his righteous quarrel and controversy against us ; necessary, for the conviction and humiliation of all ranks of persons ; necessary to preserve and maintain the truths of God ; and an useful mean, to transmit them to following generations in their purity.

CHAP. I. *The approving Part of the Testimony.*

THEREFORE, for all the above and many other weighty reasons and considerations,—the *Ministers associated*, being met in *Presbytery*, did and hereby do, in the

the *first place*, with thankful hearts, acknowledge and bear record unto the wonderful power, grace and goodness of God, in visiting this land very early with the light of the glorious gospel; whereby from these *uttermoſt ends of the earth* were *songs heard, even glory to Jesus Christ the righteous*. And thus the promises and prophecies given of old were remarkably accomplished: Namely, that the *heathen* should be given unto Christ for his *inheritance*, and the *uttermoſt parts of the earth* for his *possession*; that the *isles* should wait for his law; and that he should be the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.

Yea, when this and other nations were involved in popish darkness, God left not himself without a witness in this land. Our ancient records bear, that, in the darkest times of popery,—the Lord had some witnesses for himself amongst us, against the errors and idolatry of Rome.

And when the Lord, by a bright and clear sun-shine of the gospel in several parts of *Europe*, discovered that *Mystery of Iniquity,—Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth*: He was also graciously pleased, with an high hand and an outstretched arm, to ransom this land from the bondage of popish tyranny, idolatry and superstition; and again to bless it with the light and liberty of the gospel. So strong was the hand of the Lord upon a few polished shafts, chosen and furnished by himself; that in a short time, in the midst of the flames of fiery persecution, and against the rage and fury of devils and men,—this great work was so far advanced and effectuate, that, in the year 1560, the Pope's authority was abolished in *Scotland*: And the *first Confession of Faith* (directed mainly against the errors and abominations of the Church of Rome, the great point upon which the testimony of the Lord's witnesses was then stated), was ratified and approved by the Parliament. And in a few years thereafter, most congregations were planted with the ministry of the gospel,—and did yield subjection unto the ordinances of Christ: The government and discipline of the Church was established, according to the pattern shown in the Mount; in a due subordination of congregational elderships, presbyteries and synods, unto General Assemblies: The *First Book of Discipline*, which contains many
excellent

excellent reformation principles, written with a simplicity and plainness peculiar to reforming times,—together with some other things that were, in the judgment of the compilers of that book, adapted to the then state and circumstances of the Church; was approved by the Privy Council of *Scotland*, in the foresaid year 1560. The General Assembly, *anno* 1562, refused to admit one Mr *Alexander Gordon* to be superintendant of *Galloway*—till he should subscribe the same *. And the General Assembly *anno* 1638, in their act condemning the *five articles of Perth*, refer several times unto it; from whence it is plain, that it was received and approved by this Church at our Reformation.

Afterwards, the *Second Book of Discipline*, wherein the form of government and discipline in the House of God is more distinctly laid down, was approved and registrate by the General Assembly *anno* 1581; and appointed to be subscribed by all the Ministers of this Church, *anno* 1590: And all the pieces of the reformation then attained unto, were ratified and approved by the Parliament *anno* 1592.—In grateful acknowledgment of which rare and singular mercies, and for their own mutual strength and support against the common enemy,—the *national covenant*, having been first subscribed by the King and his household in the year 1580, was subscribed by persons of all ranks *anno* 1581; and again by all ranks of persons in the year 1590. This covenant, relating to the reformed religion then professed in *Scotland*, and more particularly expressed in the *Large Confession of Faith*,—was sworn with much chearfulness and gladness of heart; the whole land rejoiced at the oath of God. And, by this solemn Oath and Covenant, this kingdom made a *national surrender* of themselves to the Lord; and bound and obliged, both themselves and their posterity, to cleave to the truths of God,—and to the observation of his laws, ordinances and institutions.

But the above-mentioned reformation, and the glory of this Church, was much defaced; when King James VI, desirous to gratify the prelatical party in England, did, contrary to his most solemn professions, declarations and engagements,

* *Calderwood's History*, p. 32.

engagements, by the advice and assistance of some covetous time-serving churchmen,—first introduce a lordly prelacy into this Church: And afterwards corrupted the worship, by imposing popish ceremonies of the Church of *England*; under the authority of a pretended General Assembly that met at *Perth*, anno 1618. And his son, King *Charles I.*, endeavoured to carry on the same design; by imposing a service-book, and a book of popish and prelatie canons. Which course of defection continued for many years, without interruption.—Yet, during this period of grievous sinning and backsliding, there were several eminent men who witnessed against the same: Also the word of the gospel was countenanced in several corners of the land, with more than ordinary power and success; particularly in several places of the west of *Scotland*, anno 1625,—and at the *Kirk of Shots*, in the year 1630.

And, after all, the Lord was graciously pleased to turn back the captivity of this Church when it was least expected; even when prelacy appeared to be fenced with all the strength of civil authority, and a great body of the Ministry couching in conformity under the burden of it. Yet he did, in a most surprising and wonderful manner, cut asunder the cords of these plowers who plowed upon the back of this Church: And revived his own work through the land; by animating at first a few of his servants and people, in the year 1637, to testify more openly and boldly against the current of the defection and apostacy of that time. And he was pleased to give such remarkable countenance to their proceedings, that in the month of *February* 1638, notwithstanding of many threats and strong opposition of adversaries,—they renewed the national Covenant: And the power of God was present with them in such an eminent manner, that, within a few months thereafter, almost the whole land did chearfully and joyfully come under the oath of God. Here there was no force nor compulsion from the civil powers; all this was done voluntarily and chearfully, in the face of great opposition from a threatening and enraged Court.

Likewise, in the latter end of the foresaid year, a free and lawful General Assembly met at *Glasgow*; who deposed all, and excommunicated some of the Prelates: Re-

cognized and approved the national Covenant; and prelacy, with the five articles of *Perth* *, were found and declared to be abjured by it: And several other laudable acts and constitutions were made for purging the House of God, and the advancement of reformation; as the acts of that Assembly more fully bear. And, though the determinations of this Assembly were much opposed by a popish and prelatie party; yet, through the good hand of the Lord upon his servants and people, the Reformation then begun and carried on—was ratified and confirmed by the second Parliament of King *Charles I* anno 1640: The last session of which Parliament was countenanced by the King's presence, anno 1641. And from this time till the year 1650, the building of the House of God went on prosperously and successfully: During which period, the following things deserve particularly to be remembered.

I. The Lord gave testimony and witness to his own work, by a remarkable down-pouring of his spirit from on high on the judicatories,—and assemblies of his people for worship: The word of the gospel was powerful and successful; the pleasure of the Lord did prosper through the land: And a seed was sown, which the fury and rage of twenty-eight years hot persecution afterwards could not extirpate.

II. The remarkable countenance which the Lord gave to the reforming and covenanting Church of *Scotland*, did excite their neighbours in *England* and *Ireland* to join with them in a *solemn covenant*; for maintaining, advancing, and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms.—This covenant, however reproached and reviled, was, for the *matter* of it, just and warrantable; for the *ends*, necessary and commendable; and for the *time*, seasonable. The *season* when this covenant was entered into, was the dangerous state of the Church and kingdom of

* These were articles violently obtruded in the corrupt Assembly at *Perth*, 1618; which enacted, 1. Kneeling at the sacrament of our Lord's supper. 2. A private administration of that sacrament, to persons long sick or dying. 3. Private baptism, an alledged great necessity. 4. Confirmation of children by Bishops. 5. An observation of some holy-days; in commemoration of our Lord's birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, and sending down of the Holy Ghost.

of *Scotland*; the distressed state of the Church and kingdom of *England*; and the deplorable state of the Church and kingdom of *Ireland*. The *matter* of this covenant was all the precious things that are involved in pure religion and true liberty; namely, the preservation of the reformed religion in *Scotland*, in doctrine worship, government and discipline: And the reformation of religion, according to the word of God, in *England* and *Ireland*. In this covenant, every one bound themselves to personal reformation; and, in their several places, stations, and callings,—to endeavour *national* reformation: Duties obligatory upon every one, antecedently to this oath and covenant. The *end* of this solemn covenant was,—that they and their posterity after them might, as brethren, live in faith and love; that the Lord might be one and his name one, through the three kingdoms. And, as an eminent divine * expressed himself before the *House of Commons* in *England*, when they were about to swear the said covenant;—"This oath (saith he) is such, in the matter " and consequences of it, as I can truly say it is worthy of " us; yea of all these kingdoms, yea of all the kingdoms in " the world: For it is a swearing fealty and allegiance " unto Christ the King of Kings; and a giving up of all " these kingdoms, which are his inheritance, to be sub- " dued more unto his throne,—and ruled more by his " sceptre, upon whose shoulder the government is laid."—This Oath and Covenant was appointed to be sworn by persons of all ranks in *England* and *Ireland*; and was entered into by the whole body of this land: And, when it was approved by the General Assembly of this Church *anno* 1643, they express themselves in this manner,— " That they all with one voice approve of the same; with " these feelings of joy which they did find in so great a " measure, at the renewing of the national Covenant of " this Kirk and kingdom."

III. In prosecution of the above covenanted uniformity, a *Confession of Faith* was agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, with Commissioners from the Church of *Scotland*; likewise the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, the *Propositions* concerning Church-government and the ordination of Ministers, and the *Directory* for worship,—

* Mr Philip Nye.

worship,—all agreed upon by the foresaid Assembly at *Westminster*;—were received and approven by this Church, in the manner expressed in the several acts of Assembly relative unto them: To all which the General Assembly of this Church reckoned this land bound and obliged, by the *solemn League and Covenant*; as their said acts more fully bear.

IV. When the much desired and covenanted *uniformity* had proceeded thus far, many in this land involved themselves in the breach of covenant by the war with *England*, commonly called the *Duke's engagement*; which was testified against and condemned, by the General Assemblies of this Church: And the sinfulness thereof was afterwards acknowledged by all ranks of persons, when the *solemn League and Covenant* was renewed in *Scotland*, anno 1648; with a solemn Acknowledgment of sins and breaches thereof, and Engagement to the duties therein contained. In the said engagement to the duties of the Covenant, they bind and oblige themselves to *preserve the purity of religion against all error, heresy, and schism; and to study and endeavour the carrying on the work of uniformity*: Whereby the above-mentioned uniformity in one Confession of Faith, one form of Church-government and Directory for Worship,—is solemnly approven, and sworn unto. And, by the foresaid renovation of the solemn League and Covenant, this land declared they looked upon this oath as *nationally* binding upon them; whatever the behaviour of their neighbours in *England* or *Ireland* might be. And as the General Assembly, in their *brotherly exhortation* to their brethren in *England*, August 6th 1649, express themselves; “ Although (say they) there were
 “ none in the one kingdom who did adhere to the Cove-
 “ nant, yet thereby were not the other kingdom, nor a-
 “ ny person in either of them, absolved from the bond
 “ thereof; since in it we have not only sworn by the Lord,
 “ but also covenanted with him. It is not the failing of
 “ one or more, that can absolve others from their duty
 “ or tie to him. Besides, the duties therein contained
 “ being in themselves lawful, and the grounds of our tie
 “ thereunto moral; though others do forget their duty,
 “ yet doth not their defection free us from that obliga-
 “ tion

“ tion which lies upon us by the Covenant in our places
 “ and stations. And the Covenant being intended and
 “ entered into by these kingdoms, as one of the best
 “ means of steadfastness for guarding against declining
 “ times; it were strange to say, that the backsliding of
 “ any should absolve others from the tie thereof: Espe-
 “ cially seeing our engagement therein is not only nation-
 “ al, but personal; every one with uplifted hands swearing
 “ for himself, as is evident by the tenor of the Covenant.”

V. During this period, the estates of the nation also gave their helping-hand to the work of reformation; not only by the legal establishment given unto it in the fore-
 said year 1640, but also by approving the solemn League and Covenant *anno* 1644,—and by many laudable acts of Parliament passed *anno* 1649: Particularly by the *act abolishing patronages*, a grievance and yoke under which this Church had groaned ever since the reformation from popery: And by their *act for keeping the judicatories and places of trust free of corruption*; and by the *act of classes*; and by the *act for purging the army* of persons disaffected to the cause and work of reformation*. Also, by another act passed in the fore-
 said year 1649, they ordained and declared,—“ That before the King’s Majesty who now is,
 “ or any of his successors, shall be admitted to the exer-
 “ cise of his royal power; he shall assure and declare, by
 “ his solemn oath under his hand and seal, his allowance
 “ of the national Covenant, and of the solemn League
 “ and Covenant,—and his obligation to prosecute the
 “ ends thereof, in his station and calling: And that he
 “ shall

* These four acts, passed in the year 1649, are not here mentioned according to the order of time,—but rather according to the order of matter. The act first mentioned, was passed *March* 9; the second, *February* 17; the third, *January* 23; and the fourth, *June* 21.—The *act of classes* was for purging the judicatories, and other places of public trust. By this act, such as had been engaged in malignant or other scandalous courses—were distinguished into four classes; according to the several degrees of their offences. These of the first class were to be excluded from the judicatories, and other places of trust,—in all time coming. These of the other classes were to be excluded for certain lengths of time, (the second for ten years, the third for five years, and the fourth for one year); and afterwards, till they should satisfy the judicatories of Church and State as to their reformation.

“ shall, for himself and his successors, consent and agree
 “ to acts of Parliament enjoining the solemn League and
 “ Covenant,—and fully establishing Presbyterian govern-
 “ ment, the Directory of Worship, Confession of Faith
 “ and Catechisms, as they are approved by the General
 “ Assembly of this Kirk and Parliament of this kingdom,
 “ —in all his Majesty’s dominions ; and that he shall ob-
 “ serve these in his practice and family ; and that he shall
 “ never make opposition to any of these, or endeavour
 “ any change thereof.” In pursuance of this act of Par-
 liament, King *Charles II.*, having by his solemn oath de-
 clared his approbation of the national Covenant and of the
 solemn League and Covenant, and obliged himself to pro-
 secute the ends thereof,—was crowned with great solemnity
 at *Scone*, upon the 1st of *January* 1650.

The above particulars are some instances of the power
 and goodness of the most high God, manifested in the
 beginning and progress of the work of reformation in this
 land ; which *this Presbytery* judge it their duty to record
 and bear witness unto. For as the arm of the Lord was
 gloriously revealed, in recovering this Church and nation
 from antichristian darkness ; and bringing all ranks of per-
 sons within the bond of a national Oath and Covenant
 to be the Lord’s : So, when, by a surprising and wonder-
 ful appearance of divine providence, this Church was de-
 livered from the brink of ruin in the year 1638,—the ju-
 dicatories of the Church pulled down and carried off the
 rubbish of defection ; they began where former reforma-
 tion had stopped, and went forward in building and beau-
 tifying the House of God.

But since the Church, while militant, is in an imper-
 fect state ; it is not hereby intended to affirm,—that, under
 the above-mentioned period, there was nothing defective
 or wanting as to the beauty and order of the House of
 God ; or that there was nothing culpable in the admini-
 stration. All that is designed by the above particular de-
 duction is,—to declare that this Church endeavoured, and
 mercifully attained a considerable pitch of reformation,
 during the foresaid period : Towards this their several con-
 tendings and wrestlings, their solemn vows and engage-
 ments, their declarations and testimonies,—all pointed.

CHAP. II. *The condemning Part of the Testimony.*SECTION I. *Public Evils from the year 1650, till the Revolution in 1688.*

IT would have been the happiness and glory of this Church, if she had held fast what, by the good hand of God upon her, and by a series and train of remarkable providences both of mercy and judgment, she had attained unto. But how soon did her *gold become dim*? how quickly was her *most fine gold changed*? Ah! how was her glory eclipsed, and her beauty suddenly departed from her? A glorious building was pulled down: A reformation ratified, confirmed and established in the strongest terms by law, and fenced by the most solemn oaths and covenants, sworn with uplifted hands by our King, by our Noblemen, Barons, Ministers, Burgesses and commons of all sorts,—was not only sullied, but overturned; and by these very hands that had been lifted up to Heaven for the preservation and maintenance of the same. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but *Scotland* hath changed her glory for that which doth not profit! May it not be said,—*Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this; be horribly afraid: For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters; and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water?* Can there be a parallel given in any church or land, of that scene that opened of backsliding and defection,—of perjury and apostasy; or of that oppression and cruelty afterwards exercised upon such as adhered unto the cause and covenant of their God: After so many and so great appearances of the Lord in a way of mercy amongst us; and after such solemn professions of subjection and obedience unto him?

The *Presbytery* pretended not to reckon up the innumerable abominations of the land: But they judge it their duty to give some particular instances of the beginning, progress, and height of that apostasy and defection from the above-mentioned steps of reformation; in which all ranks of persons have sinfully and shamefully involved themselves.

I. When

I. When the judicatories of the Church were carrying on the work of reformation with a beautiful and pleasant harmony, a snare was laid for breaking and dividing them. In the month of *December* 1650, and in the beginning of 1651,—two several questions being put unto the Commission of the General Assembly by the King and Parliament, concerning the admission into places of public trust, both civil and military, of such as were debarred from the same by the above-mentioned acts of Parliament *anno* 1649 *: The *Resolutions* of the Commission upon the said questions were such, as the King and Parliament took occasion from them to repeal the foresaid laudable acts; and all places of public trust, civil and military, were immediately filled with such whose disaffection to the work of reformation, carried on from the year 1638, was abundantly notour †. Malignants in principle, and such as were immoral in practice, were promoted. A sham profession of repentance was required at first, from such as had been active against the work of reformation; but even this was soon laid aside ‡. And when the resolutions of the Commission were remonstrated against by some presbyteries, and several Ministers; the Commission discharged all Ministers or probationers to speak or write against them. And what was done by the Commission, was approved by some ensuing Assemblies: Who also excluded all, both Ministers and Elders, who remonstrated against the *public Resolutions*, from sitting in General Assemblies; and appointed presbyteries to oblige both intrants into the Ministry,

* The first of these two questions did *generally* respect the admission of malignants into the army as private soldiers; and *particularly*, their admission into places of military trust or command: But that general part of it is here abstracted from. The second question respected their admission into the judicatories, and other places of civil trust.

† *Wodrow's Hist.* vol. I. *Introd.* p. 3, 4, 5.

‡ The Commission's giving way to what was desired of them, by their resolutions about the two ensnaring questions,—was upon terms of a fair appearance. But it was too evident, though not duly considered by them,—that the tide was then running against any proper regard to these terms; that the corrupt measures, which were quickly taken in consequence of the resolutions,—were designed in putting the questions: And that the malignant party was in readiness to make a sham profession of repentance, so far as should be found necessary for gaining their own political ends.

stry before they were admitted to trials for ordination, and elders before they were allowed to sit in presbytery, to give it under their hand,—that they passed from any protestation or declinature against the said Assemblies; and likewise some eminent Ministers were suspended and deposed, for testifying against the foresaid resolutions. But the constitution and actings of these Assemblies having been *protested* against by a considerable body of Ministers and Elders, who were grieved at the foresaid resolutions of the Commission; all such were designed *Protesters*, as these on the other side were called *Public Resolutions*.

By the above proceedings, the nation (with the consent of the Church) delivered up, not only the maintenance and preservation of their valuable civil liberties, but also of all the civil securities and ratifications given unto the work of reformation from the year 1638,—into the hands of such who had appeared for the support and maintenance of arbitrary power and authority in the state, and who were notour enemies of a covenanted reformation. As the foresaid resolutions, both of Church and State, were contrary to and condemned by the word of God *: So their sin and guilt in this matter was the more heinous, and the more highly aggravated; in regard it was what had been so lately acknowledged, and so solemnly engaged against,—in the solemn acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties.

The sinfulness of these proceedings was witnessed against, by a considerable number of eminent Ministers and godly Elders through the land,—who laid open the dangerous tendency of them: And what they had too just ground to fear, came in a short time to pass; these men, who were now admitted into places of public trust,—had an active hand in overthrowing the beautiful constitution of this Church, and in bringing the nation under the yoke of arbitrary government. And it cannot well escape to be taken notice of,—that the most part of these who were for the *Public Resolutions*, made defection unto prelacy;

VOL. I. I wherea3

* Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Chron. xix. 2. Psal. cvi. 35. Psal. cxxxix. 21. Hof. v. 13.

whereas all the *Protesters*, except a few, stood firm against it: When, in the year 1662, this *curfed Jericho* was rebuilt. And some of the *former*, who were honest in the main, but carried into the measures of the Court,—came with regret to see their error and mistake; and to acknowledge *,—*That their brethren the PROTESTERS had their eyes opened, when they were blind.*

When this Church and land was thus miserably rent and broken, (as a just punishment for this step of declining and treachery in the cause and covenant of the Lord), the nation was brought under the yoke of *Oliver Cromwell the Ufurper*; under which it groaned for the space of ten years. During this period, a most sinful *toleration* of sectarian errors and delusions was granted by *Cromwell* and his Privy-council in *Scotland*. This was the first of this kind known among us since the Reformation: And thereby such laxness in principle and practice was introduced, as paved a way for the more general apostasy and defection which followed very soon thereafter. The fore-said toleration was faithfully witnessed against by some *Ministers* in the provinces of *Perth* and *Fife*, (in their Testimony published *anno* 1659); as contrary to the word of God, our Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism; and as contrary to, and inconsistent with the solemn Oath and Covenant of God sworn by the nation: And likewise as producing many dismal and sinful effects,—such as the increase and growth of errors and blasphemy, with laxness and profaneness in practice; and also as a temptation to men to break the Lord's bonds asunder, and to cast his cords from off them.

II. After the death of *Oliver Cromwell the Ufurper*, and when the power of the sectarian party (who had ruled the three kingdoms for several years) began to decline; the Parliament of *England* restored King *Charles II*, to the government, without any conditions or limitations: Whereby all the testimonies and declarations they had given for a covenanted reformation and uniformity, were at once given up. And immediately abjured prelacy, with the service-book and all the ceremonies, were re-imposed
in

* *Wodrow's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 112.

in *England*: A dismal presage of what was now coming on *Scotland*; where, until a meeting of Parliament, the government was lodged in the hands of a *Committee of Estates* named by the last Parliament *anno* 1651. This committee, consisting of such as were disaffected to the work of reformation, caused seize and imprison a few eminent Ministers; who met about an address to the King upon his return,—and, with the faithfulness that became their office, putting him in mind of his own and the nation's solemn covenant engagements to the Lord: Upon which occasion a proclamation was immediately emitted, discharging all meetings without the King's authority; and all the above and like petitions and remonstrances whatsoever, under a pretext of their being seditious*. This was a prelude unto the dismal scene that was now opening.

III. When the Parliament met in *Scotland* *anno* 1661, they immediately remove all the legal securities given to our Church-constitution and the whole work of reformation; by rescinding all acts of Parliament from the year 1640 to 1651 *inclusive*, and declaring all the said Parliaments null and void: They assert the *King's supremacy* in all causes; and declare all meetings, assemblies, leagues and covenants, without the King's countenance and authority,—unlawful and unwarrantable: They discharge the renewing of the *League and Covenant*, or any other public oath and covenant concerning the government of the Church,—without the King's warrant†: And having thus removed all the legal fences from our Church-constitution, they give up the government of the Church to be settled by the King,—in the way *He* judged most agreeable to the word of God, and monarchical government.

IV. At the second session of this Parliament *anno* 1662 ‡, it is declared,—That the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the Church doth properly belong to the King, as an inherent right of the Crown; by virtue of his royal prerogative and supremacy, in causes ecclesiastic: All acts of Parliament or Council which might

* *Wedrow's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 7.

† *Cha.* II. Parl. 1. Sess. 1. Acts 7. 9. 15. 16.

‡ Parl. 1. Sess. 2. Acts 1. 2.

might be interpreted to give any church-power, jurisdiction or government, to the office-bearers of the Church and their meetings,—than that which acknowledged a dependence upon, and subordination to the sovereign power of the King as supreme ; are rescinded, cassated, and annulled : *Diocesan* Bishops are restored to their dignities, privileges and jurisdictions ; all meetings of presbyteries and sessions, not authorised by the Bishop, are discharged. In their second act, all that was done in prosecution of a covenanted reformation, from 1638 to 1650, is declared rebellious and treasonable ; the *national Covenant*, as sworn in the year 1638, and the solemn *League and Covenant*, are declared to be unlawful oaths,—and imposed contrary to the fundamental laws of the kingdom : And likewise, in the said act, a *dispensing* power is assumed ; declaring the consciences of all those who had taken the foresaid oaths—free from the obligation of them. It is also declared rebellious and treasonable in subjects, upon pretence of reformation, or any other pretence whatever,—to enter into leagues and covenants, or to take up arms against the King : Whereby the sinful and absurd doctrines of *passive obedience* and *non-resistance*, condemned by the memorable *Revolution anno* 1688, were screwed up to the highest. As likewise, they annul all ecclesiastical acts and constitutions approving the national Covenant, or the solemn League and Covenant : And particularly they declared,—that the Assembly that met at *Glasgow*, *anno* 1638, was in itself an unlawful and seditious meeting ; and that their acts, deeds and sentences were, in all time coming,—to be reputed unlawful, void, and null.

Afterwards, by an act of Council at *Glasgow*, about three hundred Ministers are, without any legal procedure, thrust from their charges ; merely for non-conformity, and refusing subjection to the Prelates * : And, in the year 1663, the Parliament ordain and enact,—That all non-conforming Ministers that shall presume to exercise their ministry, shall be punished as seditious persons. And also, in acknowledgment of and hearty compliance with his Majesty's government ecclesiastic and civil,—all the subjects are required to give their concurrence and countenance

to

* *Wedrow's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 125.

to these who are, by public authority, admitted to their several parishes, (namely, prelatie incumbents); and to attend their meetings for worship, under the penalties mentioned in the act of Parliament: And also, for putting all these tyrannical laws, and others that were enacted in this period, in execution; an *high Commission* Court was erected,—most irregular and arbitrary, both for its constitution and manner of procedure. During this period of apostacy, viz. from the year 1660 to 1688, there is a continued series and train of acts of Parliament—supporting the Prelates and maintaining prelacy; and obliging the whole land to conformity, and to homologate the King's supremacy.

Thus abjured prelacy is restored: And not only is the royal prerogative screwed up to a most exorbitant height, in matters merely civil; but an authority is put into the hands of the King, like to that which is usurped by the Roman *Antichrist*. The Lord Jesus, on whose shoulder the government of his own House is laid, and who alone is able and worthy to bear this weight and burden *,—is, as far as human laws could do it, divested of his prerogative-royal; namely, his incommunicable *Headship*, sovereignty and authority over the Church his spiritual kingdom: And all this done by the representatives of the nation, in opposition and contradiction to the most solemn professions of allegiance unto the King of *Zion*; and the most solemn oaths and covenants that a people could come under to the most high God.

Yea, to such an height of heaven-daring impiety and wickedness did they arrive, that, in the year 1662, the national Covenant as it was sworn in the year 1638, and the solemn League and Covenant,—together with that remarkable paper, intituled, *The causes of the Lord's wrath*,—were most ignominiously burnt at the cross of *Linlithgow*, by the authority of the Magistrates there. And afterwards (*January* 14th 1682), the *solemn League and Covenant* is condemned, by the *Duke of York* then Commissioner and the Privy-Council,—to be most contemptuously burnt at the Cross of *Edinburgh*, by the hands of the common hangman: Which was accordingly done, to the

* Psalm ii. throughout. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Eph. i. 22, 23.

the public affronting and dishonouring of the great God, to whom these solemn vows were made. It was also declared by act of Parliament (*May 6th 1685*),—that the giving or taking of the *national Covenant* as explained in the year 1638, or of the *League and Covenant*, or writing in defence thereof, or owning them as lawful or obligatory upon themselves or others,—shall infer the crime and pains of treason. Can a parallel be given to such perfidy and treachery, to such apostasy and defection? What nation once like *Scotland*, for a zealous profession of obedience and subjection to the Prince of the Kings of the earth! but now scarce to be equalled for treachery and apostacy; attended at the same time with a flood of profaneness and immorality, overflowing the whole land!

V. In this hour and power of darkness, an universal silent *submission* is given at first to the above wicked tyrannical acts and constitutions: No open, *judicial* or *joint* Testimony, was lifted up against them. When the storm was ready to break, ten Ministers and two Elders met together, (a small number in comparison of what might have been expected in such a day of perplexity and distress),—in order to present a supplication to the King; for his employing his royal power and authority, in the preservation and maintainance of the true Protestant reformed religion in the three kingdoms, according to the national Covenant and the solemn League and Covenant,—both which he had solemnly sworn, at his *coronation* in *Scotland*: But they were, without all law and justice, immediately apprehended and incarcerated—for no other reason, but because they were framing such a supplication; and (as has been already observed) all such meetings, petitions and remonstrances of public grievances,—were discharged as seditious.

This struck such a terror on the most part, that no joint remonstrance or testimony was offered. And when some provincial *synods* in the year 1661, when the Parliament had begun to raze the work of reformation, were considering what was proper for them to do in this juncture; they were dissolved, in the King's name, by such noblemen or gentlemen as the *Commissioner* to the Parliament had appointed to observe their proceedings. All of them immediately

diately obeyed; some of them dismissed even without prayer. The synod of *Galloway* protested against their dissolution, but yet they rose immediately. The synod of *Glasgow*, at their ordinary meeting in *April*, adjourned themselves till *May*; then to consider of a supplication to the Parliament, for the security of religion: But when they were about to convene, they were discharged in a proclamation from the Cross by order from the King's Commissioner; to which they gave obedience. And likewise when, in the beginning of the year 1662, all synodical and presbyterial meetings, until authorised by the Bishops, were discharged; presbyteries, as well as synods were immediately deserted*. Such fainting in the cause of God, in this day of apostasy and backsliding,—was a sign and evidence of the Lord's indignation and wrath: And was far from that courage and resolution that sometimes appeared among the Ministers of this Church; who witnessed against the like encroachments upon the liberties and privileges of the House of God, in face of the greatest opposition.

In like manner, in obedience to the act of Council at *Glasgow*, the most part of these that conformed not to prelacy left their flocks; whereby they became a prey to the grievous *wolves* that were afterwards thrust in upon them. Yea, the greatest part by far through the whole land gave obedience to the above-mentioned act of Parliament,—requiring them to attend upon worship performed by the *Bishops underlings*, or such as conformed to prelacy; in testimony of their acknowledgment of, and hearty compliance with his Majesty's government ecclesiastical and civil: By which means all ranks of persons, from the highest to the lowest, were involved in the apostasy and defection; and guilty of the grossest treachery in the cause and covenant of the Lord. And, for all the above-mentioned and the like sins, awful judgments are threatened in the word of God. †

VI. When the Ministers who, by the proceedings of the Parliament and Council *anno* 1662, were cast out of their

* *Wodr. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 37, 38, 39, &c.

† Lev. xxvi. 16, 17, 25. Deut. xxix. 23, 24, 25. Psal. lxxviii. 9, 10, lsa. xxiv. 5, 6. Jer. xi. 9, 10, 11. Hof. viii. 1. Rev. ii. 5.

their Churches, had recovered from the consternation and damp which such a sudden convulsion in the Church and State had brought upon them; they begun to be persuaded, that it was their duty, notwithstanding of their tyrannical ejection, to preach the gospel of Christ. And the people being more and more alienated from the *Bishops creatures*, or *Curates*, as they were called, (many of them being not only ignorant and profane, but all of them being guilty of perjury and defection; in receiving a commission immediately from, and acting in subordination unto, and by a power derived from the abjured Prelates,—contrary to the word of God, and our reformation-principles confirmed by solemn oaths and covenants);—and being also sensible of the obligation still lying upon them to own their ejected Ministers as faithful servants of Christ, and of their duty to receive the ordinances of Christ as dispensed by them: Therefore not a few of the said Ministers, considering the present urgent necessity of the people, and their chearful readiness and willingness to hear the word of God,—saw themselves called of the Lord to preach the gospel, wherever providence ordered their abode.

They began at first to preach in private houses. This enraged the Prelates; who ceased not to stir up the rulers to all extravagances of cruelty, for suppressing these peaceable and harmless assemblies for the worship of God. Hence the Parliament declared all such meetings, or *conventicles*, as they were called,—to be seditious and criminal; and discharged them under the severest penalties. After this, houses were forced when people were assembled for hearing the word of God: Many were haled to prison, and the laws execute with rigour against them. These severities constrained them at last to keep their meetings in the *fields*: Whereupon the rage and fury of the rulers, instigate by the apostate Prelates, did break forth into a more extensive and boundless flame. Several acts of Parliament and Council were emitted, and all ways of cruelty imaginable taken,—to suppress meetings in houses, and in the fields: Field-meetings being discharged under pain of death to the Minister, and grievous penalties upon such as did attend them. Hence ensued a train of the greatest barbarities, wherewith these two persecut-
ing

ing reigns were indelibly stained ; as the effect of tyrannical acts, and the more tyrannical execution of them.—But notwithstanding of these severities ; the more the Lord's people were afflicted, the more they grew : When the gospel was dispensed at the peril of their lives from the sword in the wilderness, the Lord gave remarkable countenance to his own ordinances ; which were blessed to the conversion and confirmation of many.

VII. When the rulers at this time saw that they could not, by all the above acts of cruelty, extirpate the assemblies of the Lord's people for worship according to his own institution,—and which were the only monuments of his covenanted interest in the land ; but the more they laboured to suppress them, the more frequent they grew : Then the cunning and crafty device of an *Indulgence* to some of the *outed* Ministers is fallen upon ; whereby many, otherwise eminent lights, were ensnared and taken. This indulgence was first granted by the King in his letter to the Privy-Council, dated *June 7th 1769* : Whereby he authoriseth them to appoint so many of the *outed Ministers*, who had lived *peaceably* and *orderly*,—to return to preach and exercise the functions of their ministry in the parish-churches where they *formerly* served, providing they be vacant ; and that patrons should present to other churches, such others of them as the Council should approve. The Ministers allowed by this letter to exercise their ministry, were appointed to keep presbyteries and synods ; namely, such as depended upon, and were authorised by the Bishops : And in case they did not, they were to be confined within the bounds of the parishes where they were allowed to preach. Also the letter requires, that they be strictly enjoined not to admit any from neighbouring parishes to the communion ; nor to baptize their children, nor to marry any of them,—without the allowance of the Curate of the parish ; and that they should not give countenance to any who deserted their own parish-churches, and resorted to their preachings ; and that no seditious discourse or expression be uttered in the pulpit, or elsewhere, by any of these Ministers.

In pursuance of the above *letter*, the Privy-Council, at different times, appoint several Ministers to preach and

exercise the other functions of the ministry ; some at the churches out of which they had been ejected,—others (their own churches being planted with intruders) were appointed, with consent of the patron, to churches that were vacant : And every one of these Ministers were by the *Council's act* (*July 27th, 1669*), strictly enjoined to give due obedience to all the restrictions contained in the King's letter aforesaid. After the granting of this *indulgence*, the King's supremacy, (which was indeed the spring thereof, and had been amply asserted by former acts of Parliament),—is now further explained and extended, by the Parliament that met *October 19th* that same year : For, by the first act of that session of Parliament, “ it is enacted, “ asserted, and declared,—That the King and his successors have the supreme authority and supremacy over all “ persons, and in all causes ecclesiastic, within this kingdom ; and that, by virtue thereof, the ordering and “ disposing of the external government and policy of the “ Church—doth properly belong to them as an *inherent* “ right of the Crown ; and that they may settle, enact, “ and emit, such constitutions, acts and orders concerning the administration of the external government of “ the Church, and the persons employed in the same, and “ concerning all ecclesiastical meetings, and matters to be “ proposed and determined therein,—as they in their “ royal wisdom shall think fit.” After this, several restrictions were laid upon the *indulged* by the Privy-Council : Particularly, by their act *January 13th 1670*, they discharge them to *lecture* upon any part of scripture before sermon ; with certification, that, if they continue to do so, they shall be discharged to exercise their ministry within the kingdom.

Afterwards, a *second indulgence* is granted by the Privy-Council, *September 3d 1672* : And three several acts were framed about it, that same day *. By the first, a great many of the *outed* Ministers, not formerly indulged, are *classed* and confined by twos and threes in different parishes ; and discharged to pass without the bounds of the same : And a committee of Council is empowered to remove any of the Ministers named, from one of the said parishes.

* *Wodrow's Hist. Vol. I. p. 352.*

parishes to which they are confined to another, as they shall see cause; within six months after the above date of this act. By a second act of the same date, there are several other limitations laid upon them as to the exercise of their ministry, besides these mentioned in the King's letter: Such as,—“ That the *indulged*, in one and the same diocese, celebrate the communion in one and the same day; that they should not preach in church-yards, or any other places but in kirks,—under the pain of being punished as keepers of conventicles; and that they depart not forth from the parish, without licence from the Bishop of the diocese only; and that, in the exercise of discipline, all causes formerly referable to presbyteries should still in the same manner be referred unto them,” although they were now nothing else but Bishops Courts. And, by a third act of the above date, they discharge *all other* Presbyterian Ministers except these who are indulged, to exercise any part of their ministerial work, unless they are invited by the Ministers of the parishes where they live; and appoint them, under severe penalties, to attend ordinances in the said parishes.—Thus the indulgence stood, *anno* 1672: And some years afterwards, when by a public proclamation (*March* 1st 1676) the above orders and instructions were again strictly enjoined; they are, in the said proclamation, expressly called the *terms* upon which the *indulged* Ministers were *permitted* to preach, and exercise the other functions of the ministry. And, by an act of Council of the same date with the said proclamation,—“ The indulged Ministers are discharged to admit any of the Ministers *not indulged* to their communions or pulpits, under pain of being deposed by the Bishop of the diocese.”

From all which it is evident, that the *Indulgences* above-mentioned had their rise, conveyance and subsistence from the *blasphemous supremacy* usurped over the House of God; and the several acts above-mentioned were the actual exercise of the same: As will plainly appear, if it is considered that the ministerial power and authority for the government of the Church, which the Lord Jesus Christ (the alone head and lawgiver thereof) has conveyed to church-officers

officers as the proper subject and receptacle thereof *,—is, by the *act of supremacy*, most impiously and sacrilegiously transferred upon the *King* and his successors, as an inherent right of the Crown; with power to him either to exercise the same in his own person, or by others whom he shall nominate and appoint to execute his orders. Accordingly, in obedience to the commands and by virtue of an authority derived from the King, (whom the Parliament had constituted supreme over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastic),—the *Privy-Council* assume the *actual exercise of church-power*; in judging of the gifts and qualifications of Ministers for labouring in such and such parishes, and planting and transplanting them at their pleasure; and in framing and prescribing ecclesiastical canons and instructions, for regulating the exercise of the ministerial office: All which are acts competent only to *church-officers*, by virtue of Christ's institution; and quite beyond the sphere of the civil magistrate.

And, as a further evidence that the *indulgence* flowed from the *supremacy* as the *spring* thereof,—the Ministers who had the benefit of it were appointed to such and such parishes (with consent of the patron), in virtue of the *King's supreme authority exercised by the Council*; without any call from the people, or the interposure of any ecclesiastic authority whatsoever. And these who were restored to their own churches, were not admitted to them by virtue of any *former standing relation*; but merely by *appointment of the Council, in pursuance of his Majesty's commands signified to them*: As is evident from the tenor of the several acts relative to this affair. And though all the Ministers of Christ have their instructions from him alone, and are expressly enjoined to *teach the observance of all things whatsoever he has commanded them* †; every one of the indulged Ministers were *restricted* in the exercise of their ministry, by the above-mentioned limitations. And as they were strictly discharged to utter any *seditious expressions* in the pulpit, or elsewhere; so it is plain, from the acts of Parliament and Council at this time,—that *faithful ministerial freedom* against the perfidy and treachery

* Matth. xvi. 19. chap. xviii. 18. 20. 2 Cor. x. 8. 11.

† Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

chery of all ranks of persons (in the present horrid violation of the Oath and Covenant of God, and in rearing up or submitting unto the abjured hierarchy and wicked supremacy), was what was then reckoned *sedition*.

And though it may be alledged that the ministry of some of the indulged was attended with success, and that the instructions given them were not punctually observed by them all; yet the *acceptance* of the indulgence in the above complex circumstances, and omitting to give a plain and distinct testimony, in that case of confession, against that wicked supremacy usurped over the House of God,—was a *departing* from a very material part of the cause and testimony of the Church of *Scotland*. And it was no small aggravation of the sinfulness of this step, that some Ministers who were in the Council's nomination never accepted of it; but continued with others of their brethren who were not included in it (notwithstanding of cruel edicts against them), to *jeopard* their lives in the *high places* of the *field*,—testifying and witnessing against the present apostasy and defection from *Scotland's* covenanted reformation.

VIII. The whole land was yet further involved in dreadful and heinous guilt,—by the many sinful *oaths*, *declarations* and *bonds* that were imposed; during this period of apostasy and defection, between the year 1660 and 1688. Particularly, by the 11th act of the first session of Parliament *anno* 1661,—all persons in public trust were obliged to swear the oath of *allegiance*, or rather *supremacy*: Whereby they were required to declare, *That the King is the only supreme governor over all persons and in all causes*; and that they should promote and support his foresaid *jurisdiction*, against all deadly. Together with this oath, an *Instrument assertory* of the royal prerogative is appointed to be signed; whereby the subscribers consented to the King's *absolute power*, and owned the unlawfulness of resisting him upon any pretext whatsoever: And so not only gave up their civil liberties, but materially renounced the whole work of reformation,—as it was begun at our secession from popery, and as it was carried on in the year 1638; though all was approved by King and Parliament,—and, which is more, was signally owned of God. The
Privy-Council,

Privy-Council, or any having authority from them, were impowered to impose the said oath and assertory act upon any whom they pleased: Hence, in a short time, these *oaths* reached the most part of the subjects; and became trying badges of loyalty. If a person was sifted before the Council or other Courts,—if he swore the allegiance and signed the assertory act, he was dismissed; but, if he refused, there was no mercy for him.

Again, by the 5th act of the second session of that same Parliament (*anno* 1662), in order to put the grave-stone upon the covenanted reformation,—a *Declaration* is appointed to be signed by all persons in public trust: Wherein they were required to *affirm* and *declare*,—"That it is unlawful, upon any pretext whatsoever, to enter into leagues and covenants, or to take up arms against the King, or these commissioned by him; that all the convocations, petitions and protestations, that were used in the beginning and for carrying on the late troubles," (*i. e.* all that was done for carrying on the work of reformation from the year 1638,) "were unlawful and seditious; and that the *national Covenant* as explained in the year 1638, and the *solemn League and Covenant*, were in themselves unlawful oaths; and that there lieth no obligation upon any of the subjects, from the said oaths, —to endeavour any change or alteration in the government, either in Church or State, from the present establishment by the laws of the kingdom." This *Declaration* became one of the great sins and snares of this time: *Perjury* is now made a chief qualification, and necessary condition of all that were to be admitted to places and offices in Church and State.

Likewise by an act of Parliament *anno* 1670* against people's separating from the public worship in their own parishes, (*i. e.* from the perjured *conformists* to prelacy),—heritors and life-renters, if they obstinately withdraw from their parish churches for a certain space of time, must be sifted before the Council; and required to sign a bond, obliging themselves,—that they shall not, upon any pretext whatsoever, rise in arms against the King, or any commissioned by him; and that they shall not assist or countenance

* *Cba.* II. Parl. 2. Sess. 2. Act 7.

countenance any who shall rise in arms: And the refusers of this bond are appointed to be secured or banished, and their single or life-rent escheat to belong to the King. This was a snare unto many, and a ground of suffering unto others.

Besides these oaths imposed by authority of Parliament, many other ensnaring oaths and bonds were also enforced by the Privy-Council; such as the *bond of peace*, appointed to be subscribed anno 1667*: and the *bond for regularity*, as it was called, (appointed by act of Council August 2d 1667, to be subscribed by all the heritors, &c.),—whereby they bind and oblige themselves, and all under their authority, that they shall not withdraw from the public divine worship in their respective parish-churches; that they shall not have their children baptised, nor be married, but by such Ministers as are lawfully authorised; and that they shall not be present at conventicles, either in houses or the fields;—and all this under heavy and severe penalties.

But that oath called the *Test*, deserves particular consideration. It was a *self-contradictory* oath; and had not a pallel among all the oaths ever imposed in any protestant country. It was framed by the Parliament, August 31st 1681. At first, only persons in public trust were obliged to take it; but afterwards it became a general *test of loyalty*: And was imposed upon all ranks of persons,—and made a handle even of persecuting unto death great numbers, some of whom were of a very considerable rank and quality; and multitudes, who would not comply with it, were grievously oppressed. In the *first part* of this oath, the protestant religion contained in the *first Confession of Faith* is professed; and all principles and doctrines contrary to, and inconsistent with the same, are renounced: And yet, in direct contradiction thereto, the King's *supremacy*, in the utmost extent, is again and again asserted; together with the unlawfulness of subjects their resisting the sovereign, upon any pretext whatsoever;—the obligation of the Covenants, national and solemn League, is disowned;

* By subscribing this bond, persons became obliged (for themselves, their men, tenants and servants), under certain penalties,—to keep the public peace; according to what was then reckoned a peaceable living.

owned; and the government of the Church, then established by law, is approved.—Thus the representatives of the nation, and together with them many of all ranks of persons through the land, make themselves more and more vile; by the blackest perjury, the grossest apostasy and defection from the Lord, that a people or a nation could be guilty of.

IX. The wickedness of this period did rise higher; even to the greatest *tyranny* and *cruelty*, exercised upon all such as endeavoured to keep their garments clean in this sinning and defiling day. The above-mentioned acts of Parliament, with the oaths and bonds imposed by the Parliament and Privy-Council,—laid a foundation for near twenty-eight years *grievous persecution*. A simple non-compliance with the prelatie government then established, declining to attend ordinances dispensed by the Bishops underlings, being present at conventicles in houses or in fields,—refusing the oath of supremacy, or the other oaths and bonds that were imposed,—owning the obligation of our solemn Covenants—and the lawfulness of defensive arms, or of resisting a tyrannical sovereign; were reckoned *crimes of the highest nature*, and subjected multitudes of all ranks unto unparalled severity.

During this period, the *witnesses* for Scotland's covenanted Reformation endured *cruel mockings and scourgings*; they wandered about in *deserts* and in *mountains*, in *dens* and *caves of the earth*,—*destitute, afflicted, tormented*. Multitudes were banished their native country; others suffered long imprisonment, *spoiling of goods*, and grievous tortures,—that had not a parallel in any protestant country. Many *resisted even unto blood, striving against sin*. The most public cities of the nation were defiled with innocent blood; such as *Edinburgh, Glasgow*, and other cities: Yea, to such an height did cruelty and tyranny arrive,—that many were killed in the *open fields*, without any legal process*; the merciless soldiers were both their judges and executioners.

This torrent of blood was opened in the martyrdom of the noble *Marquis of Argyle*, May 27th,—and of the *worthy Mr James Guthrie*, five days thereafter in the year 1661;

* *Wodrow's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 433.

1661; when the Parliament was razing *Scotland's* covenanted reformation, and planting the *tree of prelacy and arbitrary power*. This *curfed tree* behoved to be soaked with the noble blood of an excellent patriot, a staunch presbyterian, a vigorous asserter of *Scotland's* liberties; and with the blood of an eminent and faithful Minister of Jesus Christ: And much bitter and bloody fruit did this tree of prelacy bear, in the sufferings unto death of many excellent person of all ranks; till the beginning of the memorable year 1688, when the torrent stopped in the death of Mr *James Renwick*. The principal articles of his indictment, and for which he suffered, were his affirming,—that the Duke of York (then King *James VII*) was not rightful nor lawful King of these realms; and that because he was a Papist, had never sworn the coronation-oath, and was overthrowing the fundamental laws of the kingdom: Also his affirming and defending the lawfulness of defensive arms, both for our civil and religious liberties*. These principles were espoused by this Church, ever since our reformation from popery; and were justified by all the three nations at the *Revolution*.—Thus, in our *skirts* is found the *blood of the saints*, who suffered during this dismal period. And, if the ordinary course of divine procedure is observed, all ranks in *Scotland* have reason to fear,—that a *land defiled with perjury and blood*, must be *purged by blood*: Especially when these heinous abominations have never been duly nor seriously considered, nor mourned over†.

X. When apostasy and defection had come to such a prodigious height, as is already mentioned,—the whole *Protestant interest* in the three nations was brought into the greatest danger; by the accession of the Duke of York unto the throne, after the death of his brother *Charles II* anno 1685. He openly professed and declared himself a Papist: And the representatives of the nation, without requiring the coronation-oath, being met in Parliament,—make a declaration and offer of duty unto this popish Prince; wherein they own his absolute power and authority, and promise him obedience without reserve. In con-

VOL. I.

L

sequence

* *Wodrow's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 632, 633.

† Lev. xxvi. 25. 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.

sequence whereof, though the Parliament that met the following year refused to rescind the *penal statutes* against Papists,—yet this popish Prince did most tyrannically abrogate and pull down these hedges of the reformation, by virtue of his usurped supremacy and absolute power: First in his letter to the Privy-Council, dated *August 21st 1686*; wherein, by his power paramount to the law, he declares his resolution to protect his *catholic subjects*,—and allows them the free exercise of their religion in their houses, and appoints the *royal chapel* at Holy-rood-house to be fitted up for popish worship;—whereupon the land was immediately filled with swarms of *Popish priests*; and a popish school is erected at Holy-rood-house, for corrupting the youth. And then, by his proclamation *February 12th 1687*, he does (by his prerogative-royal, sovereign authority and absolute power) *suspend* all penal laws against Papists: Wherein also there is *liberty* granted to these whom he calls *moderate presbyterians*; but it is under such severe restrictions, and so manifestly in connection with the toleration of popery (for which indeed it was chiefly designed),—that none of the presbyterians took the benefit of it.

When severals began to be alarmed at such an open and violent attack upon the Reformation,—wherein such large favours were granted to the Papists, not only as to the exercise of their religion, but also capacitating them to enjoy places of power and trust; that this toleration was too bare-faced for *Presbyterians* to fall in with: Therefore, that the main design of introducing *popery* might be the better coloured, and the Reformation more effectually (though less sensibly) unhinged; there comes down a *second form* of a toleration, in a proclamation dated *June 28th* that same year,—conceived indeed in more general terms, but of the same nature and import with the former. Therein it is declared, That the *Archbishops* and *Bishops*, and all subjects of the protestant religion, are to be defended in the free exercise of *THEIR* protestant religion as by law established: And likewise, by virtue of the prerogative and absolute power, all *penal* and sanguinary laws, made against any for non-conformity to the religion established by law,—or the exercise of their respective religions,

gions, rites, and ceremonies; are stopped, suspended, and disabled: And a liberty is granted to all the subjects, to meet and serve God in their own way and manner,—in private houses, chapels, or places hired or built for the purpose; providing nothing be preached or taught that may any wise tend to alienate the hearts of the people from the government: And field-meetings are still discharged, under the severest penalties *.

It is evident, from the abrogating of the *penal statutes* in this as well as the former proclamation,—that this *boundless toleration* was calculated chiefly in favours of the *Papists*, as well as the former; although they be not expressly named in it. And yet all the *Presbyterian* Ministers in the kingdom (excepting a very few) not only accepted the benefit of it; but also a considerable body of them, met at *Edinburgh*, did send an *address of thanks* for the foresaid toleration,—dated *July 21st 1687*, and subscribed in their own name and in name of the rest of the brethren of their persuasion:—Wherein they *offer their humble and hearty thanks* to that popish Prince; and *bless the great God, who put it into his heart to grant them the said liberty*, which they call a *gracious and surprising favour*: Withal *promising* (in obedience to the above proclamation) *an entire loyalty in their doctrine and practice*, (consonant to their known principles, contained in the Confession of Faith); and also *beseeching, that these who promote any disloyal principles or practices (as they disown them) may be looked upon as none of theirs, whatever name they may assume to themselves* †.

The above *boundless and illimited toleration* was, no doubt, contrary to the principles of the *Church of Scotland*; contained in her Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism. The design of the granter, and the tendency of the liberty granted, was the introduction of *popery* and slavery; its conveyance was from the King's *absolute power*, which all were required to obey without reserve,—suspending and disabling all the penal statutes against *Papists*, whereby all the legal bulwarks of the protestant religion against popery were undermined and overthrown: Likewise

* *Wodrow's Hist.* Vol. II. p. 616, 617.

† ————— App. No. 135.

Likewise the particular proviso above-mentioned,—“ that
 “ nothing should be preached or taught, which might any
 “ way tend to alienate the hearts of the people from him
 “ or his government,” (*i. e.* in plain terms, That no
 doctrinal testimony should be emitted against a popish
 Prince, and his arbitrary government,—overturning the
 very foundations of our civil as well as religious liberties);
 was a most sinful and unwarrantable, and, in the present
 juncture, a most dangerous restriction and limitation upon
 Ministers in the exercise of their ministry.—From all
 which it is plain, that the *acceptance* of this toleration,
 conveyed after the above manner, with *such* an *address* of
 thanks for it, and without any public joint testimony a-
 gainst the evils contained in it (except that which was
 offered by Mr *Renwick* and the few that adhered to him),
 —was not only stumbling to many, but became one of
 our public national sins.

The above-mentioned particulars are some instances of
 the beginning, progress and height of the *backsliding* and
defection of all ranks of persons, between the years 1650
 and 1688; from a glorious Reformation formerly attained
 unto: whereby a reformed land, a land of light, and un-
 der the most solemn engagements to the Lord,—became a
 land of perjury and blood; and was *filled with sin against*
the holy One of Israel. Wherefore,

The *Ministers associate* together, being met in
Presbytery, judge it their duty to testify and bear
 witness against all these heinous sins and abomi-
 nations: And they did, and hereby do *condemn*
 all the several sins, backslidings and steps of de-
 fection from our covenanted Reformation above-
 mentioned, for the particular reasons and
 grounds above condescended upon; and all o-
 ther acts and deeds, in so far as connected with
 and supporting the above steps of defection;—
 as contrary to the word of God; and inconsis-
 tent with the covenanted principles of this
 Church,

Church, founded thereon. And they hereby *declare*, that they *were* and *are just causes* of the Lord's righteous quarrel and controversy with our Princes, our Nobles, Barons, Burgeſſes, Miniſters and Commons of all ſorts in the land: And that, for the above heinous ſins and provocations, all ranks of perſons have reaſon to mourn before the Lord; leſt, by their continued and growing impenitency and obduration, a righteous and holy God be provoked to come out of his holy habitation,—and viſit the iniquities of our fathers upon us in this generation, who are many ways ſerving ourſelves heirs unto their ſins and backſlidings:—As will appear from the inſtances afterwards to be given.

SECTION II. *Public Evils from the Revolution, ſill the Acceſſion of GEORGE I.*

THIS Church and land having groaned under the yoke of *arbitrary government* and a *hot perſecution*, for the ſpace of about twenty-eight years; the Lord was graciously pleaſed to break the yoke from off our necks, by a *glorious* and *ſurpriſing appearance* for us at the *Revolution*, in the latter end of the year 1688: Whereof the *Prince of Orange* was the happy inſtrument; who was afterwards proclaimed *King*,—to the joy and ſatisfaction of all ſuch as had a juſt ſenſe of the worth and value of their liberties, religious and civil. Wherefore this *Preſbytery* judge it their duty, to *commemorate with thankfulneſs* the *divine power and goodneſs* manifested in this wonderful work, whereby all the three nations were reſcued from *popery and ſlavery*.

This deliverance was ſeaſonable as to the juncture, and ſurpriſing as to the manner in which it was given. It was brought about at a time when the deſigns were open and declared, for bringing this land under Antichriſtian idolatry and darkneſs; when *Papiſts* were advanced to the
moſt

most considerable posts; when the penal statutes against them were abrogated by an absolute dispensing power, assumed and usurped by a *Popish tyrant* supported by a numerous army: And at a time when the whole land was couching under these grievous burdens. Neither was it *our own sword*, or *our own bow*; but *the right hand of the Lord*, and *his holy arm*, that wrought salvation for us.

It might have been justly expected, upon the back of such a remarkable and great appearance of God,—that *former iniquities* and backslidings should have been *particularly acknowledged*, and the *House of God purged*; and that reformation-work should have been advanced and carried on, after the example and practice of former reforming periods. But, instead of this, our *transgressions are multiplied*; new sins and backslidings are added to our former trespasses and defections. *Forty years* and upwards have we in this generation *grieved the Lord* in the wilderness; *we have sinned with our fathers*, and have not understood his wonders, nor remembered the multitude of his mercies,—though he saved us for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known: We have forgot his works, and have not waited for his counsel. And in following counsels of flesh and blood, we have declined gradually from him; until our apostasy and defection, in the present age, is come to an height,—in some particular instances, that were not known in former times.

I. When the PARLIAMENT of Scotland met immediately after the Revolution, in the *first session* they *abolished prelacy*; as *a great and insupportable grievance to this nation*, and *contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation*,—they having *reformed from popery by presbyters*. And in the *second session* of the same Parliament, *anno 1690*, *presbyterian church government and discipline* is established and ratified; according to the civil ratification and establishment given unto the government of this Church *anno 1592*. Thus a retrograde motion is made near an hundred years backward; and all the legal securities given to this Church in that covenanting period from 1638 to 1650, are *overlooked*

looked and passed by. Likewise all the acts of the first session of the first Parliament of King *Charles II.*, together with the infamous *act rescissory anno 1661*, (whereby a covenanted reformation was razed, and the acts and deeds of that covenanting period were declared seditious and treasonable),—are left untouched in this above-mentioned settlement.

Prelacy is never considered as contrary to the word of God, and abjured by our covenants; nor our presbyterian church-government and discipline, as what the land is bound and obliged to maintain by the most solemn oaths and covenants. The indignities done to the *national and solemn League and Covenant*, and consequently to the most high God the great party in them, are never regarded; but these solemn oaths and covenants are left buried under an *act rescissory*, and other acts and deeds subversive of them.—If this nation, when an opportunity and season was given them, and when the Lord gave such a remarkable and wonderful deliverance unto them,—did not resent the indignities and injuries done in the former period, to that God whose awful and holy name was interposed in these solemn oaths and covenants; it is a righteous, just, and holy dispensation of providence,—that we should be *no more a nation*: And that our Noblemen, Barons, and Burgeses, (who had such a golden season and opportunity put into their hands for honouring God, and doing justice to that great name which was abused and profaned in such a dreadful and unparallelled manner),—should for ever be deprived of the opportunity of acting by themselves in a parliamentary capacity.

Likewise, by the same Parliament the *Oath of Allegiance* to the Sovereign is appointed to be sworn,—“in place of any other oaths imposed by laws and acts of preceding Parliaments.” Though it may be said, that this has a respect to the oaths imposed during the persecuting period; yet the terms in which the act is conceived appear plainly to exclude the *oath of the Covenant*, which contained a very solemn test of allegiance to the sovereign: Especially when it is considered, that the above-mentioned *act rescissory* was not repealed; and also that the draught of an act, for excluding such as had a share

share in the oppressions of the former period from places of public trust,—was laid aside, after it was twice read in Parliament. Hence such were admitted into places of public trust and power, as were both in principle and practice opposite to a covenanted reformation. Thus, after our great deliverance, we mingled ourselves again with these; and learned of them their ways.

II. The first GENERAL ASSEMBLY of this Church after the Revolution, did sit down *anno* 1690, under the shadow of the above *civil establishment*: And never reclaimed against what was defective in the same; but kept measures with the *state*, in their several acts and deeds at that juncture. It is not here intended to detract from that regard that is due to the memory of these worthy Ministers, and others, who came out of the furnace of a hot persecution; and did bear a part in our first General Assemblies after the Revolution. Yet it is necessary, both for the sake of the present as well as succeeding generations,—to mention some *considerable omissions*, of which Ministers and many others have complained: And which cannot be otherwise looked upon, than as *standing grounds* and *causes* of the Lord's displeasure and controversy with us; and as one of the springs of the many evils which have, since that time, befallen this Church and land.

It was the laudable practice, in reforming times, to condemn all steps of defection; and duly to censure such as were guilty of public backsliding. Accordingly, by the Assembly that met *anno* 1638,—all the *Prelates*, being ringleaders in the apostasy, were deposed; and some of them excommunicate. Also, in the said reforming period, they returned to the Lord,—by a particular acknowledgment and confession of the sins of the Ministry, and of the whole land; and by renewing their solemn covenant-engagements. But the *General Assembly* that met in the year 1690, made no particular acknowledgment of the many heinous backslidings of the former period: But on the contrary, when many lamentable steps of defection and apostasy were complained of, in a large paper offered to the foresaid Assembly 1690 by Mr *Alexander Shields* and other two Ministers; the said Assembly was so far from attempting the redress of their grievances, that

that they approve the report of their committee of overtures,—calling them * “Unseasonable and impracticable proposals, uncharitable and injurious reflections, tending rather to kindle contentions than to compose divisions.”

And though many iniquitous and blasphemous statutes were made in the two *persecuting reigns*, for dethroning the glorious Redeemer,—and pulling the crown, which he should alone wear, from his royal head; yet the Assembly 1690 did not assert the divine right of presbytery, and the intrinsic power of the Church,—which are two special branches of his glorious headship in and over the same. And that power and authority given by the Lord Jesus to the office-bearers of his house, to hold their meetings in his name,—was not *stedfastly adhered* unto: In regard that, though the King's Commissioner dissolved the Assembly 1692, and though their meetings were adjourned from time to time by the King's proclamation till the year 1694; yet there is not any *standing testimony* against such sinful encroachments upon the rights and liberties of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

And neither the foresaid Assembly 1690, nor any of the Assemblies of the Church since that time, did by any one *formal act* or statute explicitly and judicially condemn the sacrilegious usurpation of his royal dignity,—by that blasphemous *supremacy*, arrogated during that bloody period; nor asserted him to be what he really is,—the *alone supreme Head and King over his Church*, as his free and independent kingdom. It is true indeed that the Assembly 1690, in their act appointing a *national fast*, own,—“that the supremacy was advanced” (*viz.* in the preceding reigns) “in such a way, and to such a height, as never any Christian Church acknowledged.” Yet they do not *absolutely* condemn that usurped supremacy, nor expressly assert the headship and sovereignty of Christ; in opposition to the above-mentioned bold and daring invasion made upon it, in the late times of lamentable defection and grievous persecution.

Further, they did not expressly approve the covenanted-reformation of this Church,—attained unto from the year

1638 to 1650; nor did they justify the wrestlings, testimonies and sufferings of the Lord's remnant in the late persecuting times, for the same: Nor has the *obligation* of our *Covenants*, national and solemn League, and their binding force upon posterity,—ever been expressly asserted by any particular act of Assembly since the Revolution; nor has the solemn League and Covenant been expressly named, in any of the grounds of national fasting since that time;—though both these might have been expected; considering how these Covenants were so openly violate, and ignominiously burnt, in the former period.

Also, the above-mentioned sinful and conscience-hardening *oaths*, *bonds* and *declarations*, (whereby Christ was sacrilegiously robbed of his royal crown and dignity, his servants oppressed,—by some of which the nation gave up with their valuable civil liberties, as well as their religious privileges,—and by every one of which the land was involved in the dreadful sin and guilt of perjury); yet these bonds and oaths were never expressly and particularly condemned and mourned over. Neither has the subversion of our covenanted reformation, by these parliamentary deeds which laid a foundation for the tyranny and bloodshed which followed thereupon,—been particularly acknowledged, in any of our acts appointing national fasts since the Revolution.

Neither have such as made defection been duly censured; but, on the contrary, the *index* of the unprinted acts of Assembly 1690 bears a public declaration by the Moderator,—“ That the Assembly would depose no incumbents, simply for their judgment anent the government “ of the Church:” That is, they declare,—That the perfidious prelates and their underlings were not to be deposed, for their treacherous defection from the covenanted principles of this Church. And, in a consistency with this declaration, the Assembly 1694 * enjoin their commission, (as several Assemblies afterwards did),—“ To receive into ministerial communion, such of the late conform Ministers as, having qualified themselves according to law, shall subscribe the *Formula* ” which was then framed for them: Whereby they were not bound

to

* Act II. § 6.

to acknowledge, that presbyterian government is founded on the word of God; but only,—“ that the Church—government, as now settled by law, is the only government of this Church.” Nor are elders required to sign any other *Formula*, to this day.

Upon the signing of the above *Formula*, a great many prelatical ministers and elders were admitted into the bosom of the Church,—and had access to sit in judicatories; without requiring any evidence of their repentance or sorrow for their heinous and scandalous defection: As will be evident from the *Commission's address* to Queen Anne (recorded act 10th, Assembly 1712), wherein they have these words; “ We cannot but lay before your Majesty “ this pregnant instance of our moderation,—that, since “ our late happy establishment, there have been taken in “ and continued hundreds of dissenting (*i. e.* episcopal) “ ministers, upon the easiest terms.” When these things are duly considered, and *former* reforming periods and *this* compared; what a vast difference is there between the house of God in *Scotland* in its former lustre and glory, and the fabric and building as it was now reared up by Church and State at the Revolution! The above practice, both of Church and State, is contrary to scripture pattern and example; and the practice of reforming times recorded there*.

III. Though the above *omissions* were frequently regretted by Ministers and others; yet it was still alledged, that the land was not *ripe* to return by solemn national covenanting to the Lord: And that it was not a proper time and season, to be *too particular* in mentioning public national sins; and in condemning the gross defections and heinous backslidings in the former period. Thus, when the present season and opportunity of necessary duty was neglected, it came to be *altogether lost*: Particularly when by the *treaty of Union*, we were brought under the more immediate influence of our neighbours in *England*; whose principles as to Church-government and discipline, and in several points that concern the worship of God, differ widely from ours.

Our

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 29, to the close. Ezra ix. and x. chap. Neh. ix. and x. chap. Psal. lxxviii. and Psal. cvi. throughout.

Our *Covenant-union* with *England*, anno 1643, was reckoned the honour and glory of the three lands at that time: it was an Union for carrying on and advancing a work of reformation in *England* and *Ireland*,—according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches. But, by the foresaid treaty of Union, we were incorporate with them upon *terms opposite* unto and *inconsistent* with our *Covenant-union*: In regard the maintenance and preservation of the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the church of *England*,—is made a fundamental and essential part of the union of the two kingdoms.

The *Commission* of the General Assembly that met at that time, being informed that, in *the act of ratification* of the articles of the treaty of Union, which the Parliament of *Scotland* were about to pass,—it was declared, That the Parliament of *England* might provide for the *security* of the *Church of England*, as they should think expedient, to take place within the bounds of the kingdom of *England*: Therefore the said Commission, in their representation and petition of *January* 16th 1707, given in to the Parliament, *remonstrate* against the foresaid clause in the act of ratification;—not only as putting a blank in the hands of the Parliament of *England*, to enact what they should think fit for securing the *hierarchy* and *ceremonies* of their Church; but also as a *consent* on the part of *Scotland*, that it be an article and fundamental of the Union,—and, as it is contained in the ratification, implying a manifest *homologation* of the said hierarchy and ceremonies: Therefore they crave,—“ That there may be no such stipulation or consent for
 “ the establishment of the hierarchy and ceremonies, as
 “ they would not involve themselves and the nation
 “ in guilt; and as they would consult the peace and
 “ quiet of this nation, both in Church and State.” But as the ensuing *General Assembly* only approved of the proceedings of this Commission in *common form*,—without an express approbation of their conduct in this particular, though matters of less moment have sometimes been particularly noticed: So the Parliament of *Scotland* nowise regarded the foresaid representation and petition; having, in their act of ratification, given *their consent*,—That the
maintenance

maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies in England, should be a fundamental and essential article of the Union.

And though it was then alledged, that the *said Union* was the best mean to secure our religion and liberties against the attempts of a *popish pretender* and his adherents : Yet as it was upon terms contrary to our *Covenant-union* ; so we hereby declared our confidence in an *arm of flesh*, and not in the living God, who had so often and so wonderfully saved us from our enemies. And, upon all these grounds and reasons, the foresaid Union may be justly looked upon as contrary to and condemned by the word of God* : Whereupon the said Union is become one of our publick *national sins*. And from this time, instead of making progress in reformation-work, we have been declining and backsliding every day ; and have fallen under the weight of such grievances, as shake the foundation of our Presbyterian Church government and discipline. For,

IV. Among the more immediate, bitter and sinful fruits of the foresaid *incorporating union* : the whole nation was made to groan under the weight of unnecessary, superfluous and sinful *oaths* : And indeed, *because of swearing*, to this very day, the land mourneth. How oft are the same oaths repeated, even upon one and the same day ; to qualify men to act in different capacities ? How often are dealers in candles and leather obliged to swear ? How do many of the trading part of the nation involve themselves in *perjury*, by the ordinary custom-house oaths at the entry of ships ? And how much guilt do they bring upon themselves and the whole land, by running of goods, and such like fraudulent practices ; which are frequently attended with a very gross profanation of the Lord's day ? How is the name of God profaned ; and the just sense and impression of the importance, weight, and solemnity of an oath,—and also the dreadful guilt and danger there is of rash and false swearing,—worn off the spirits of many, by a frequent and unnecessary repetition of oaths ?

Likewise, a *superstitious* form of swearing was soon introduced among us from *England* ; by *laying the hand upon, and kissing the gospels* : A very corrupt innovation in
that

* Jer. ii. 16, 17, 18, 36, 37. Ezek. xvii. 15. Isa. xxx. 1, 2, 3. chap. xxxi. 1, 2, 3.

that solemn piece of divine worship ; and contrary to scripture-pattern, which alone should regulate us,—as in every other part, so in this solemn act of worship. Also the *sacramental test* *, and conformity to the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church of *England*,—is required of the members of this Church, while serving the Sovereign in *England* and *Ireland*. The Commission of the General Assembly, in their petition to the Parliament of *Scotland*, November 8th 1706, represented,—*That this might prove of most dangerous consequence to the Church* ; yet, in the treaty of Union, there was no particular provision made against it. The fatal and dangerous consequences of the same, are every day more and more seen ; persons of all ranks resorting to *England*, and *conforming occasionally* to the liturgy and ceremonies there : That zeal and concern manifested by this Church in former times, for the purity of divine institutions, is gradually decaying,—it is daily languishing ; and a nauseous lukewarmness and detestable indifferency doth prevail among us,—about the worship, government and discipline of the Lord's house.

Also, immediately after the Union, the *oath of abjuration* was imposed upon all persons in publick trust, both civil and military. This oath was framed at first by the Parliament of *England* ; and calculated for the maintenance of their constitution, both in Church and State : And as the Commission, in their last mentioned address, observe,—“ It bears a reference to some acts of the *English* Parliament, wherein are some qualifications required in the successor to the Crown,” (*viz.* That he should be of the communion of the Church of *England*, and shall maintain the Church of *England* as by law established), “ which are not suitable to our principles.” In all the above particular instances, the whole land is more and more involved in sin †.

V. In the year 1712, *an almost boundless toleration* is granted ; by which the government and discipline of this Church were exceedingly weakned : And a wide door was opened for laxness in principle, which never fails to bring

* That is,—a taking the sacrament of our Lord's supper, as dispensed in the Church of *England*.

† Amos viii. 14. Jer. iv. 2. chap xxiii. 10.

bring alongſt with it looſeneſs in practice. This toleration, as the then Commiſſion of the General Aſſembly obſerved in their addreſs to *Queen Anne*,—"is ſuch as gives a large licence almoſt to all error and blaſphemy, throws up all good diſcipline; to the diſhonour of God, and the ſcandal and ruin of the Chriſtian religion." Tolerations of this kind are contrary to the word of God*; and to the principles of this Church, contained in the Confession [chap. xx. § 4. chap. xxiii. § 3.] and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechiſm—*What are the ſins forbidden in the ſecond commandment?* And the preſent was mainly intended and deſigned for ſtrengthening and ſupporting a malignant and diſaffected party in *Scotland*,—who, ever ſince the Revolution, have openly eſpouſed the cauſe and intereſt of a *popiſh pretender*; and whoſe meetings, to this day, are not only nurseries of ſuperſtition,—but ſeminaries of diſaffection to our ſovereign King *George*, and the proteſtant ſucceſſion in his illuſtrious family.

As this boundleſs toleration is a ſtroke and judgment, upon this Church and land; ſo the growth of error and ſuperſtition, the genuine fruits and effects of the ſame, may be juſtly reckoned among the cauſes of the Lord's wrath againſt ſinful and backſliding *Scotland*. It deſerves alſo to be noticed, that the *English liturgy* and ceremonies were never received, even by theſe of the episcopal denomination in *Scotland*, till after the late incorporating Union; when a manner of worſhip, never practiſed in *Scotland*, was ſet up in all the corners of the land. Together with the ſaid act of *toleration*, the above mentioned *oath of abjuration*, which was at firſt required to be ſworn (as is already obſerved) by all perſons in civil and military truſt,—was now impoſed upon the *Ministers* of this Church: Which, beſides the diſmal effects it produced in renting and breaking the miniſtry among themſelves, may be juſtly reckoned one of our public *national ſins*;—in ſo far as the united conſtitution, directly oppoſite to our Covenant-union, is thereby homologate and ſworn unto; and in regard the *ſaid oath*, together with the *allegiance*,

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33. Ezra vii. 25, 26. Zech. xiii. 2, 3. Rom. xiii. 3, 4. Rev. ii. 2, 14, 15, 20. chap. xvii. 12, 16, 17.

ance, is substitute in the room of our solemn national *Covenants*,—which contain the strictest engagements of duty to the Sovereign, a most solemn renunciation of popery, and consequently of all popish Pretenders whatsoever.

VI. In the foresaid year 1712, the *right of presentation* to vacant congregations, claimed by patrons, was again restored unto them. Against this the Church of *Scotland* has always testified, as subversive of the right of election belonging to Christian congregations by the word of God; as in the *Second Book of Discipline*, [chap. xii.]:—“ The
“ liberty of the election of persons called to the ecclesiasti-
“ cal functions, and observed without interruption so
“ long as the Kirk was not corrupted by Antichrist, we
“ desire to be restored and retained within this realm :
“ So that none be intruded upon any congregation, either
“ by the Prince or any inferior person,—without law-
“ ful election, and the assent of the people over whom
“ the person is placed ; as the practice of the apostolical
“ and primitive Kirk and good order crave.”

As the act of Parliament restoring the right of presentation to patrons, was a heavy stroke upon this Church ; so the countenance that has been given unto this antichristian usurpation by the present judicatories of the Church,—in the settlement of Ministers upon presentations from patrons, over reclaiming and dissenting congregations,—is one of the *sins* and *corruptions* of the present time ;—whereby the Lord Jesus, the only Lord and Lawgiver to his Church, is dishonoured ; and his heritage wounded, scattered and broken : As may be afterwards more particularly considered.

VII. Besides the toleration and patronage-acts, countenance is given by authority of Parliament to the observation of *holidays* in *Scotland* ; by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice in the latter end of *December*. This superstitious practice was condemned by the acts and constitutions of this Church ; and declared, by the General Assembly that met at *Glasgow* anno 1638, to be abjured by the national Covenant.

These are some instances of the gradual *declinings* of this Church and land from reformation-purity,—that did take

take place between that remarkable and wonderful appearance of divine providence in the year 1688, and the accession of our late sovereign King *George* to the throne. Therefore this Presbytery judge it their duty to condemn, *likas they hereby do condemn*, all the foresaid steps of defection, for the several grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—as contrary to the word of God, and our solemn covenant-engagements: And they hereby declare, that they are *national sins*,—and every one of them may be justly reckoned among the grounds and causes of the Lord's indignation and controversy with us; for which all ranks of persons have reason to be deeply humbled before the Lord,

SECTION III. *Public Evils from the accession of GEORGE I, till the publication of this Testimony.*

ARTICLE I. *A general view of Matters.*

THOUGH, instead of making progress in reformation-work,—many valuable pieces of reformation, once attained unto by this Church and land, were not only neglected, but upon the matter given up at the *Revolution*; and though, instead of holding fast what was then attained unto, the Church of *Scotland* did lose ground,—and was involved in new steps of declining and backsliding;—and at the same time, though a malignant and dissaffected party were unwearied in their plots and projects to destroy any good work the Lord had wrought for us by the *Revolution*: Yet the Lord, whose name is *gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and slow to anger*,—dealt not with us according to the desert of our sins; but, under many frowning and wrath-like dispensations of providence, remembered mercy,—and *saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us*.

Therefore, among the many remarkable appearances of God for his Church and people in this land, this presby-

VOL I, N tery

tery judge it their duty to *commemorate* and *record* with thankfulness,—the deliverance from threatened ruin, that was brought about by the right-hand of the Lord in the years 1714 and 1715 : When, in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, thick and dark clouds covered us ; and when it was evident that designs were not only formed, but very far advanced, for placing a *Popish Pretender* upon the throne of these realms ;—which, if they had taken place, would have brought the three nations back into the same miserable circumstances in which they were immediately before the Revolution. But the Lord was graciously pleased to scatter the clouds, and to disappoint these projects ; by the *seasonable accession* of our late sovereign King George to the throne. This was like *another Revolution* ; brought about by his immediate hand, who *cuts off the spirit of Princes*, and appears *terrible to the Kings of the earth*.—No sooner was this deliverance given us, than an *unnatural rebellion* broke forth in our bowels : The interests of a Popish Pretender were openly espoused ; and a banner was displayed against the Revolution-interest, our sovereign King George, and the Protestant succession in his royal Family : And that by a set of men in this land, for whose sake the toleration above-mentioned was granted ; and who were always declared enemies of *Scotland's* covenanted-reformation. But the Lord was graciously pleased to break their measures ; to pour shame and contempt upon our enemies, and to turn wars into peace in all our borders.

When the hand of the Lord was so remarkably seen in working *manifold deliverances* for us, it might have been expected that something should have been done for carrying on reformation-work. What could have been done more for his vineyard in *Scotland*, than what he has done ? and yet, when he looked that we should have brought forth grapes, we have brought forth *wild grapes*. Since this last deliverance, we have not only fallen asleep,—as if we had no enemy to fear ; but, as if we had been delivered to add iniquity to our former trespasses,—corruption in principle and practice is come to a greater height in several instances in this present age, than in any period since our reformation from popery.

Damnable

Damnable and pernicious principles are propagate, which have a tendency to raze the grounds and foundation of our Christian faith. *Arian* blasphemies and *Arminian* errors have been vented, in one of our most considerable seminaries of learning; where the youth are trained up for the holy ministry. Serious godliness, and the supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men in their effectual calling,—have been treated even from the press, and otherwise, in a very ludicrous manner. And yet the standard of a faithful testimony against the prevailing errors of the time, has not been lifted up by the judicatories of the Church.—A form of godliness, a shadow of religion, takes place of the power and life thereof through the land. The keys of government and discipline, (committed to the office-bearers of the Church by her glorious head, for the edification of his body,—and preserving his institutions in their purity; for purging the house of God of unsound ministers and members, for removing of the offences whereby the flock of Christ may be hurt or stumbled, and for the maintenance of the liberties wherewith Christ hath made his people free), have been perverted to quite opposite ends. The power of religion is daily decaying among us; and the very form of it is despised by many, and by others it is rested upon.

ARTICLE II. *Professor Simson's Errors.*

BUT as it is necessary to give particular instances, of the progress and height of the present defection and backsliding; so this presbytery judge it their duty to condescend upon the following.

I. A scheme of pernicious and dangerous principles has been vented by Mr *John Simson*, professor of divinity in the university of *Glasgow*; as is evident from the several processes that have been carried on against him.

1st. When he was processed before the judicatories of this Church, in the years 1714, 1715 and 1716; the following dangerous errors are owned and defended by him,—in his answers to the libel given in to the presbytery of *Glasgow* against him, by the Rev. Mr *James Webster*, late Minister of the Gospel at *Edinburgh*.

1. That

1. That "By the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, including tradition; God has given an obscure objective revelation to all men, of his being reconcilable to sinners:" And that "the heathen may know that there is a remedy for sin provided, which may be called an implicit and obscure revelation of the gospel:" and that "it is probable none are excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin provided by God, and published twice to the whole world,—except those who, by their actual sin, exclude themselves; and slight and reject the clearer light of the gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church *:" And that "if the heathen would in sincerity and truth, and in the diligent use of means that providence lays to their hand, seek from God the knowledge of the way of reconciliation,—necessary for their acceptable serving of him, and being saved by him, he would discover it to them †." Likewise he affirms, that there are means appointed of God for obtaining saving grace; which means, when diligently used with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being heard,—God has promised to bless with success: And the going about these means in the foresaid manner, is not above the reach of our natural ability and power ‡."

All these propositions are directly contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God, in our *Confession of Faith*: Particularly, chap. i. § 1.;—where, according to the scriptures cited, we are taught, that,—“Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.” Whereas, by the above propositions, Mr *Simsen* affirms,—That the end and design of *natural religion* is, not only to leave men inexcusable; but that thereby an *obscure* offer of grace is given them, and an implicit revelation of the gospel made unto them: And that the benefit of the

* Answers to Mr *Webster's* libel, p. 77, 78, 79. 115.

† ————— p. 80. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 216.

the remedy provided for sin extends to all without the Church, who do not slight and neglect this obscure discovery and offer of grace: And therefore this obscure revelation and offer of grace is such, as lays a foundation for the heathen, in the diligent use of the means which providence lays to their hands,—their seeking in sincerity and truth the knowledge of the way of reconciliation: Whereby some kind of *sufficiency* is given to natural religion; yea such a sufficiency, as lays a foundation and ground for hope and confidence towards God,—for obtaining some way or other reconciliation to him, and consequently eternal salvation;—contrary to Eph. ii. 12. where the whole *heathen* world are declared to be *without God* and *without hope*. And, whatever advantages the heathen may be supposed to have by tradition, yet the apostle testifies,—That *the world by wisdom knew not God*: And they were so far from seeking after the knowledge of the way of reconciliation, that when it was published unto them by the gospel,—they rejected the same as *foolishness*, and not agreeable to their carnal reasonings*.

Besides, by the above propositions, mens natural powers and abilities, whether they be within or without the Church,—are exalted to the dishonour of God, to the disparagement of his sovereign and efficacious grace:—And in direct contrariety to that miserable state and condition, into which all mankind are brought by their apostasy from God in the *first Adam*; being *dead in trespasses and sins*, under the power of spiritual darkness,—and not only enemies to God, but by nature enmity against him: As is held forth from the scriptures in our *Confession of Faith*, [chap. ix. § 3.]; “—Man, by his fall into a state
“ of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritu-
“ al good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man,
“ being altogether averse from that good, and dead in
“ sin,—is not able by his own strength to convert him-
“ self, or to prepare himself thereto.”

The above propositions, concerning man's powers and abilities in a natural state, are more dangerous; when it is considered, that Mr *Simson* rejects the ordinary answer given

* 1 Cor. i. 21, 25. Isa. lxxv. 1. with Rom. x. 20.

given by our orthodox divines to a *Pelagian* objection, viz. That 'it is unjust in God, to command what we 'have no power to perform.' All reformed divines make answer,—That we had sufficient power and ability in *Adam*, but have lost it by our fall; and though we have lost power to *obey*, yet God has a just right to *command*.—This answer Mr *Simson* rejects as no way sufficient; and substitutes what is contained in the above propositions, in the room of it *: Whereby, instead of removing the objection, he gives up the cause of truth to the *Pelagians* and *Arminians*; to the dishonour of God, and hardening of these gross perverters of the truth,—and to the subverting and poisoning of those with whom he was intrusted, to train up for the holy ministry.

2. The said Mr *Simson* maintains and defends,—That "there was no proper Covenant made with *Adam* for "himself, and his posterity †:" That "*Adam* was not "a federal head to his posterity ‡:"—And that "if *Adam* "was made a federal head, it must be by divine com- "mand; which is not found in the Bible."—The above propositions are contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God, in our *Confession*, [chap. vi. § 3. chap. vii. § 2.]; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms,—*Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

The above gross and erroneous propositions, are the foundation and ground of a chain of principles connected with them; whereby the reformed doctrine, contained in our Confession of Faith, is undermined and overturned. For, by the denial of the *federal representation*, the proper *imputation* of *Adam's* first sin falls to the ground: And though the Professor pretends to maintain the imputation of *Adam's* first sin from the sanction of the law; yet his reasoning amounts to no more, than that his posterity are punished for the same. When *Adam's* federal representation of his posterity is disowned,—his first sin can no more be called theirs, than the sins of their immediate parents. That this proper imputation of *Adam's* first sin is denied by him, will further appear from the following gross and dangerous propositions which he maintains and defends. For

3. He

* Answers, p. 210.

† ——— p. 174.

‡ Answers, p. 166.

———— p. 176.

3. He affirms,—That “ it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, to create a soul without original righteousness, or any disposition to good : * ” And that “ the souls of infants since the fall, as they come from the hands of their Creator, are as pure and holy,—as the souls of infants would have been created, supposing man had not fallen : ” And that “ they are created as pure and holy as *Adam’s* was,—except as to these qualifications and habits which he received, as being created in an adult state † . ” —These propositions are directly contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God, in our *Confession* ; [chap. vi. § 2, 3. 4.] ; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms,—*Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell ?* and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechism,—*How is original sin conveyed from our first parents to their posterity ?*

4. Mr *Simson* also affirms and defends,—That “ it is probable that, of the whole race of mankind, more are elected and saved than reprobated and damned ‡ . ” He owns, that of the *adult*, or these come to years,—it is plain from scripture, that the “ most part are neither elected nor saved : ” But that he may account for the number of the elected and saved, he asserts,—That “ it is more than probable that baptized infants, dying in infancy, are all saved ¶ ; ” and that “ it is manifest if God should deny his saving grace to all or any of the children of infidels, he would deal more severely with them than he did with the fallen angels ¶ . ”

By the above propositions, Mr *Simson* judges it probable,—that all infants, dying in infancy, are included in the decree of election ; which is very agreeable to the *Arminian* scheme,—which teacheth, That the decree of election is influenced from foreseen conditions and qualifications in the creature : But contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God in our *Confession*, [chap. iii. § 5.] ;—“ Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according

* Answers, p. 225.

† Answers, p. 226.

‡ ——— p. 106.

|| ——— p. 111.

¶ ——— p. 113.

“ according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the
 “ secret counsel and good pleasure of his will,—hath chosen
 “ in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere grace
 “ and love; without any foresight of faith or good works,
 “ or perseverance in either of them,—or any other thing,
 “ in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him
 “ thereto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace;”—
 and consequently, without any regard to their infant or
 adult state. It is plain from the scriptures,—that God
 hath chosen some of mankind to eternal life, out of his
 mere good pleasure allenarly: [Rom. ix. 11.] *For the*
children being not yet born, neither having done any good or
evil; that the purpose of God according to election might
stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;—[Ver. 13.]
As it is written, Jacob have I loved; but Esau have I hat-
ed.

Besides, by the above propositions, he maintains the cer-
 tainty of the salvation of all infants; when he challengeth
 his Maker with exercising greater severity towards them,
 in case he should deny his saving grace to any of them,—
 than is exercised towards the fallen angels: Especially
 when this is compared with his other proposition, noticed
 above,—That “ none are excluded from the benefit of
 “ the remedy for sin provided, but these who by their
 “ actual sins exclude themselves.”—All these proposi-
 tions have an evident tendency to lead men to low
 thoughts of the evil and desert of original sin, imputed and
 inherent. Likewise, if the above doctrine taught by Mr
Simson is true, then there is no ground to fear the dam-
 nation of any upon the account of *original sin*; though it
 is the bitter fountain and spring of all our actual transgres-
 sions, and makes us children of wrath by nature: Ac-
 cording to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God,
 in our *Confession*, [chap. vi. § 6.];—“ Every sin, both
 “ original and actual, being a transgression of the righte-
 “ ous law of God, and contrary thereto, doth in its own
 “ nature bring guilt upon the sinner; whereby he is
 “ bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law,
 “ and so made subject to death,—with all miseries, spiritu-
 “ al, temporal and eternal.”

5. Mr *Simson* likewise impugns the *immediate previous divine concurrence* with all the actions of the reasonable creature; and in place thereof affirms,—That “God may determine infallibly all the actions of reasonable creatures, that are not above their natural powers, and are not contrary to their natural inclinations and dispositions,—by placing them in such circumstances, by which they have a certain series and train of motives laid before them; by which they may infallibly, yet freely, produce such a series of actions as he has decreed:” And “this (says he) may be sufficient for ascertaining all the events of sinful actions; and of the ordinary, natural and civil actions of men*.” It is true, the providence of God is a great depth; his *judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.* The terms that have been used by reformed divines, in explaining the doctrine of providence, some of them are not in our Confession; being nowise adapted to vulgar capacities. Yet the immediate divine concurrence with all the actions of the reasonable creature, has been affirmed and maintained by reformed divines,—in opposition to *Jesuits* and *Arminians*: And is necessary for maintaining and asserting the absolute dominion of God over the free actions of reasonable creatures; and their immediate dependence upon him in motion and action,—as well as in their being, and preservation in the same: Whereas the way whereby Mr *Simson* explains the divine providence about all the actions of reasonable creatures, leaves the creature *independent* in motion and action upon the adorable Creator:

Though some of the ordinary terms, that are used by divines upon this subject, are not in our Confession of Faith; yet the doctrine of the immediate previous divine concurrence with all the actions of the reasonable creature, as it is explained by our reformed divines,—is plainly held forth therein from the word of God. [chap. v. § 4.];—“The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence,—that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men: And that not by a bare permission; but such as hath joined with it a most
VOL. I. N wise

* Answers, p. 124.

“ wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and
 “ governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his
 “ own holy ends: Yet so as the sinfulness proceedeth on-
 “ ly from the creature, and not from God; who, being
 “ most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the au-
 “ thor or approver of sin:”—And the answer to the ques-
 tion in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, *What are God's
 works of providence?*

6. Mr *Simson* likewise affirms and maintains,—That “ a
 “ regard to our own happiness, and the prospect of our
 “ eternal felicity and blessedness in the enjoyment of God
 “ in heaven, ought to be our chief motive in serving the
 “ Lord upon earth *.” He also affirms, upon the answer
 to the first question of the Catechism,—That “ our glori-
 “ fying God, being the means,—is subordinate to our en-
 “ joyment of him for ever, which is our ultimate end †:”
 and That, “ were it not for the prospect of happiness, we
 “ could not, and therefore would not serve God ‡.”—As
 Mr *Simson* perverts the doctrine held forth from the scrip-
 tures, cited upon the answer to the first question of our
 Larger and Shorter Catechisms: So, as the Committee of
 the General Assembly 1727 very justly observe (*State of
 the Process*, p. 277.), “—What is set forth in the above
 “ article, is contrary to the instinct of that new nature the
 “ Lord endueth all his people with in regeneration; which
 “ makes them, by the further influence of grace, desire to
 “ serve God for himself and his supereminent excellen-
 “ cies,—and not merely, or chiefly, for the prospect of
 “ their own happiness; whence it is their greatest burden,
 “ that they cannot more serve him for himself. And con-
 “ sidering how much all men are bound to make the glo-
 “ ry of God their chief end, though yet they are called
 “ herewith to pursue happiness; and likewise that it is
 “ through a prevailing respect to God's honour and glory,
 “ and not a mere or chief respect to our own happiness,
 “ that the difference between nature and grace is to be
 “ cleared to the doubtful Christian: Therefore,—it
 “ is no small dishonour to God, to teach what is set down
 “ in

* Answers, p. 139,—155.

† Answers, p. 140.

‡ ——— p. 149.

“ in the above articles; and that the contrary was necessary to be taught.”

7. Mr *Simson* also maintains, and defends it as his opinion,—That “ there will be no sinning in hell, after the “ last judgment *.” This absurd opinion is contrary to the doctrine held forth in our Confession and Catechisms; where, according to the scriptures, we are taught,—“ That “ sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of “ the law of God.” And since it is certain, that the natures of the damned in hell were never renewed, they can have no manner of conformity to the law of God: And from their corrupt and unrenewed natures, must necessarily flow the highest enmity and rage against the justice and holiness of God in punishing of them; which is expressed in scripture by *gnashing of the teeth* †.

2dly, By another process against the said Mr *Simson*, begun before the Presbytery of *Glasgow* anno 1726,—and carried on before the judicatories till the Assembly 1729, when it was concluded; the said Mr *Simson* was found guilty of many other gross and dangerous errors: In regard, it was found clearly proven,—“ That, in teaching “ his students, he had denied the *necessary existence* of our “ Lord Jesus Christ;”—and that he had affirmed, “ That “ his necessary existence is a thing we know not;” and “ that the term *necessary existence* is impertinent, and not “ to be used when talking of the Trinity;” and “ that the “ *three persons* of the adorable Trinity are not to be said to “ be *numerically* one in substance or essence;” and “ that “ the terms, *necessary existence*, *supreme Deity*, and the title “ of the *only true God*, may be taken, and are by some “ authors taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father,—and so not belonging to the Son.” By all which propositions, the *supreme Deity* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity,—as also the supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost, our comforter and sanctifier,—is blasphemously impugned and denied by the said Mr *Simson*: in direct opposition to the scriptures of truth; and the doctrine held forth from them in our
Confession

* Answers, p. 233.

† Matth. viii. 12.

Confession of Faith, [chap. 2. § 1, 3. chap. 8. § 2.]; Answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, “*How many persons are there in the Godhead?*” And Larger Catechism, Quest. 11.

It deserves also to be observed, That some hypotheses adopted by Mr *Simson*, and which tend to attribute too much to natural reason,—are the very spring of the above dangerous errors vented and taught by him. In his second letter to Mr *Rowan*, he adopts the following *Socinian* propositions,—“That reason, as it is taken for evident propositions, naturally revealed, is the principle or foundation of theology; and that nothing is to be admitted in religion, but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so.” Although Mr *Simson* pretends to disown these propositions, as they are maintained and explained by the *Socinians*; yet it is obvious from the plain meaning of the words, that the above propositions, adopted by him, exalt reason above divine revelation: Contrary to the doctrine held forth in our *Confession of Faith*, [chap. 1. § 10.],—“The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy Spirit, speaking in the scriptures;” And contrary to the answer to the second question, in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Mr *Simson* having once set reason in the chair, and exalted it to be judge in principles of faith; it is no wonder, that he rejects the testimony of God in his own word, concerning the Covenant-headship and representation of the first *Adam*,—and the many sacred truths that are connected with that important article; and that he has maintained the other errors charged against him in the first process. From the same source and spring also,—he was at length led to impugn and deny the *supreme Deity* and *necessary existence* of him—whose name is *Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace* *.

This

This PRESBYTERY considering, that the purity of doctrine, maintained in this Church, is very much endangered by the above gross and pernicious errors; and that many may be in hazard of being tainted with them, in a day wherein atheism and infidelity do so much abound: Therefore they Did, and hereby Do, upon the weighty grounds and reasons above narrated, C O N D E M N, as contrary to the word of God, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—the several propositions above-mentioned, maintained and defended by Mr *Simson*, viz ‘ *Ratio, ut sumitur pro propositionibus naturaliter revelatis, est principium seu fundamentum theologiæ* *;’ and ‘ that nothing is to be admitted in religion, but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so: That by the light of nature, and works of creation and providence, including tradition,—God hath given an obscure objective revelation to all men, of his being reconcilable to sinners;’ and “ that the heathen may know, that there is a remedy for sin provided; which may be called an implicit or obscure revelation of the gospel: That it is probable none are excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin, provided by God, and published twice to the world; except those who by their actual sins exclude themselves,—and slight or reject the clearer light of the gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church: That if the heathen, in the use of the means they have, would seek the knowledge of the way of reconciliation; God would discover it to them: That there are means appointed of God, for obtaining saving grace; which means, when diligently used with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being heard,—God hath promised to bless with success; and the going about these means

* A little before, there is a translation of this *Latin* sentence, viz. “ Reason, as it is taken for evident propositions, naturally revealed, is the principle or foundation of Theology.”

' means in the foresaid manner, is not above the reach of
 ' our natural ability and power :—That there was not a
 ' proper Covenant made with *Adam*, for himself and his
 ' posterity : That *Adam* was not a federal head to his po-
 ' sterity ;" and " that, if *Adam* was made a federal head,
 ' it must be by divine command, which is not found in
 ' the Bible : —That it is inconsistent with the justice and
 ' goodness of God, to create a soul without original righte-
 ' ousness or dispositions to good : that the souls of infants
 ' since the fall, as they come from the hands of their Cre-
 ' ator,—are as pure and holy as the souls of infants would
 ' have been created, supposing man had not fallen ;' and
 ' that they are created as pure and holy as *Adam's* was
 ' created,—except as to those qualifications and habits
 ' which he received, as being created in an adult state :
 ' That it is more than probable, that all baptised infants
 ' dying in infancy, are saved ;' and ' that it is manifest, if
 ' God should deny his saving grace to all or any of the
 ' children of infidels, he would deal more severely with
 ' them, than he did with the fallen angels :—That there is
 ' no immediate previous divine concurrence, with all the ac-
 ' tions of the reasonable creature :' And, ' that a regard to
 ' our own happiness, and prospect of our eternal felicity and
 ' blessedness in the enjoyment of God in heaven,—ought
 ' to be our chief motive in serving the Lord upon earth :'
 and, ' and that our glorifying God, being the means,—is
 ' subordinate to our enjoyment of him for ever, which is
 ' our ultimate end ;' and ' that, were it not for the pro-
 ' spect of happiness, we could not, and therefore would not
 ' serve God : that there will be no sinning in hell, after
 ' the last judgment.' And the PRESBYTERY here-
 by declare all these propositions vented and
 taught by the said Mr *Simson*, to be dangerous
 and pernicious errors, dishonouring to a God of
 truth, and having an evident tendency to sub-
 vert the souls of men.

As also this PRESBYTERY did and hereby do
 CONDEMN, the several propositions found
 clearly

clearly proven against the foresaid Mr *Simson* by the several General Assemblies of this Church,—*Annis* 1727, 1728, and 1729:—such as, “ That
“ our Lord Jesus Christ is not *necessarily existent*; that
“ the *necessary existence* of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a
“ thing we know not; that the term *necessary existence* is
“ impertinent, and not to be used in talking of the Trini-
“ ty: that the three persons of the Trinity are not to be
“ said to be NUMERICALLY One in substance or es-
“ sence: That the terms *necessary existence, supreme Deity,*
“ and the title of the *only true God*,—may be taken in a
“ sense that includes the personal property of the Father,
“ and so not belonging to the Son.” All which pro-
positions they did, and hereby do declare to be
damnable heresies; denying the Lord that bought
us, subverting and overthrowing one of the prin-
ciple foundations of our Christian faith: And to
be blasphemous indignities, done to the person
of the eternal Son of God our Redeemer; as al-
so unto the person of the Holy Ghost our Sancti-
fier and Comforter: Whereby these adorable per-
sons are robbed of their true and supreme Deity,
and reduced into the class and rank of depen-
dent and inferior beings. As also they did,
and hereby do declare,—That the said Mr *Sim-
son*, in regard of the atrocious and heinous na-
ture of the foresaid errors, deserved not only
suspension from teaching and preaching; but
to have been deposed from the office of the
holy ministry,—and excommunicated from all
society, communion and fellowship with the
Church and people of God: Until he gave
satisfying evidences of his repentance and for-
row, for teaching and spreading the foresaid
dangerous errors and blasphemies.

ARTICLE III. *Professor Campbell's errors, and the Assembly's conduct with him.*

II. **A** SCHEME of most pernicious and dangerous principles has been vented by Mr *Archibald Campbell*, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of *St Andrews*; as is evident from the books he hath published, and from his explications and defences in the process that has been laid against him: In which the following gross errors are defended by him.

1st, That "the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest, or pleasure *." That "self-love is the great cause, or the first spring of all our several motions and actions; which way soever they may happen to be directed †." That "self-love is universally the first spring in every rational mind; that awakens her powers, begins her motions, and carries her on to action ‡." That "men may refuse to worship God,—unless he presents himself favourably inclined to their interest, and studious of their happiness §." That "we are to settle it as our main purpose,—to recommend ourselves to the love, esteem and commendation of God, and of all mankind,—by our moral virtue ||." That "self-love, as it exerts itself in the desire of universal, unlimited esteem,—is the great commanding motive that determines us to the pursuit of virtue ¶." And that, "seeing God acts for his self-interest,—we cannot act from any higher principle than our self-interest **."

All the above propositions are directly contrary to the word of God: In which it is expressly asserted,—that all our religious actions must proceed from a new nature, and from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and from a holy regard and love to God; and not from self-love or self-interest, as their first spring and principle, [Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Acts xxvi. 18. John xv. 4, 5. Math. xxii.

37,

* Enquiry into the original of Moral Virtue, p. 463.

† ——— p. 4.

§ ——— p. 460.

¶ ——— p. 257. 258.

‡ Enquiry, p. 101.

|| ——— p. 273.

** ——— p. 432.

37, 39.] ;—and that our main purpose or ultimate end ought not to be the advancement of our own self-interest, but the glorifying of God ; that is, the advancement of his *declarative glory*, [2 Cor. v. 15. Rom. xiv. 7. Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3. John v. 30. John vii. 18. 2 Tim. iii. 2. to 5.]. In which places of scripture it is declared,—that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose example we are to imitate, *pleased not himself*, and fought not *his own will*, nor his own glory ; but the will and glory of his Father that sent him : And that to be lovers of our ourselves, that this, to love ourselves *inordinately*,—is one of the blackest of crimes. And it must needs be an inordinate self-love, when, according to Mr Campbell, our self-interest or happiness is made the chief and leading motive of our love to God : since, according to this *selfish-scheme*, we love God not for *himself*, or for his own sake,—but for *ourselves* : Whereby we prefer ourselves to our Maker, and love ourselves more than the adorable Creator ; which may be justly reckoned the greatest impiety.

It must also be observed, that as the declarative glory of God, or the manifestation of his being and the glorious excellencies and perfections of his nature,—is the chief end of God in all his works, (*for the Lord hath made all things for himself*, Prov. xvi. 4.) ;—so it is very gross and absurd in Mr Campbell to affirm, “ That our self-interest “ must be the great cause and first spring of all our several actions ; and that our self-love is the great commanding motive, that determines us to the pursuit of virtue : “ And that because ” (as he thinks fit to express himself) “ the Deity is studious of the good of his creatures from “ self-interest *.” Thus he wickedly argues,—That we, in acting from our self-interest, imitate God ; and cannot act from a higher and more perfect principle. What is this else, but to usurp the throne of God ; and to exalt ourselves, if not above him, at least unto an equality with him ? It is an ambitious aspiring to that very thing which, through the subtilty of Satan, was the inlet at the beginning to our sinful and shameful apostacy from our Maker ; Gen. iii. 5. *And ye shall be as gods.*

But the whole scope and design of divine revelation is, to recover us from these selfish principles into which all

VOL. I.

O

mankind

* Enquiry, p. 432.

mankind are plunged by the fall; and to bring us back to our primitive love, obedience, and subjection to JEHOVAH. And the whole word of God proclaims unto us, That as the Lord hath done all things for himself, (that is, for the manifestation of his own infinite and glorious excellencies); so the most noble imitation of God is, to love him chiefly *for himself*: And to yield subjection and homage unto him, *because he is God*; and that he may be glorified in our bodies and spirits, which are his. This is the great end and design of the whole œconomy of grace; and of the dispensation of the divine Spirit to sinners, in effectual calling and regeneration: That they may be animate and moved from this higher and more excellent spring and principle, in all the duties of their obedience to God,—and in every relative duty towards men, with whom they are associate; as is evident, not only from the above, but also from the following scriptures, [1 Cor. x. 31. and vi. 20. Mat. v. 16. Rom. xi. 36. Psal. cxv. 1. Rev. iv. 8. 11. Rev. v. 13.].

It is also evident from the word, that God's infinite perfection, and his glorious excellencies,—are the main ground and reason of our loving, obeying, and worshipping him; and not chiefly his benefits to us, and his promoting our happiness. Therefore it is blasphemy to say,—*That we might refuse to worship God, if it were not for the prospect of promoting our own happiness*. For though God allows us to pursue happiness, and though the prospect of it may be a secondary motive to our obedience; yet the scriptures declare,—That what God is in himself, or his own infinite perfection, is the primary ground and formal reason of the whole of our obedience and worship*. It must likewise be observed, that, in our best and most virtuous actions,—we can never recommend ourselves to the love, favour, and esteem of God; as Mr Campbell affirms: In regard his love and favour to any of his creatures, and much more to sinful men, is absolutely free. As they cannot merit his favour; so there is no motive without himself, to move him to love them.—Hos. xiv. 4. *I will love them freely*. Deut. vii. 7, 8. *The Lord did set his love upon you,—because*

* Exod. xx. 2. Lev. xix. 12. Psal. xcvi. 4. 7, 8, 9, 10. Psal. xcix. 3. 5. Psal. civ. 1, 2. Psal. cxlviii. throughout. Rom. i. 1. Rev. iv. 8. 11. Rev. vii. 10, 11. Jer. x. 6, 7. 10.

cause the Lord loved you. Rom. ix. 13. Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated: Compared with verse 11th, —The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth. And whatever we do, we must still reckon ourselves unprofitable servants.

The above propositions are likewise contrary to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms: *Conf.* [chap. vi. § 7.], wherein it is asserted from the word of God,—“ That
“ works done by unregenerate men, although for the mat-
“ ter of them they may be things which God commands,
“ and of good use both to themselves and others; yet
“ because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith,
“ nor are done to a right end, the glory of God,—they
“ are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make
“ a man meet to receive grace from God:”—and to *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 190, 196.], and *Less. Cat.* [*quest.* 101, 107.]: And *Larg. and Less. Cat.* [*quest.* 1st.]; wherein it is said,—“ That man’s chief and highest end is to glo-
“ rify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever:”—And to *Less. Cat.* [*quest.* 47.]; where “ the not worshipping and
“ glorifying the true God as God,”—is the great sin forbidden in the first commandment: And to *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 105.]; where “ self-love, self-seeking,—and all
“ other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind,
“ will, or affections upon other things; and taking them
“ off from God, in whole or in part;”—are affirmed, from the scriptures there cited, to be among the sins for-
bidden in the first commandment,

Mr *Campbell* also affirms,—That “ self-interest or plea-
“ sure is the only standard by which we can judge of the
“ virtue, *i. e.* the value or goodness, of any action whatso-
“ ever *.” That “ virtue and utility, are two words sig-
“ nifying the same thing †.” That “ the intrinsic goodness
“ or rectitude of moral virtue, lies directly in the fitness of
“ it to the self-love and happiness of mankind;” and that
“ actions are virtuous, only as they promote self-interest †.”

And

* Enquiry, p. 389.

† Enquiry, p. 453.

And that "moral goodness, as well as natural, lies in
 "advantage and pleasure *." And that "we like and
 "approve all the moral qualities that are called virtuous,
 "for no other reason but for their being good to us; i. e.
 "for the pleasure they give us, or for their gratifying our
 "self-love †." And that "the goodness of any action,
 "from which it is denominate moral virtue, immediately
 "lies in the conformity it has to our self-love; while it
 "concurs and co-operates with this principle, in appro-
 "ving our being happy,—and to secure and promote
 "our well-being ‡."

These propositions do directly contradict the holy scrip-
 tures: In which it is expressly declared,—That the law of
 God is the adequate and only standard by which the good-
 ness of actions is to be tried; and not our own self-interest
 and pleasure §. And in regard the holiness of God is mani-
 fested in his law, and his sovereign authority is interposed
 therein; the goodness of our actions doth immediately lie
 in their conformity to the holy law of God,—and in their
 being done by faith in Christ, and from a respect to the au-
 thority of God the Lawgiver. And there is nothing more
 contradictory to the whole word of God, than to assert,—
 that the goodness of our love to God and his Son Jesus Christ,
 or of any act of obedience and devotion, lies directly in its
 fitness to promote our personal interest ||.—And the above
 propositions do likewise contradict our Confession of Faith
 and Catechism, [*Conf.* Chap. I. § 2. Chap. xvi § 1, 2.
Larg. Cat. Quest. 3. *Less Cat. Quest.* 2.]: where it is
 asserted,—That the scriptures "are given by inspiration
 "of God to be the rule of faith and life;" and that they
 are "the only rule of faith and obedience."

Mr *Campbell* also asserts,—That "virtue depends not
 "on the arbitrary will of any being, but flows from the
 "essen-

* Enquiry, p. 354, 355.

† Enquiry, p. 357, 358.

‡ ——— p. 319, 320.

§ Isa. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. Psal. cxix. 9. Deut. iv. 2. Rev.
 xxii. 18. Psal. cxix. 4, 5. Prov. xxx. 6. Exod. xx. 2—17. Deut.
 vi. 20. Luke i. 6. Gal. iii. 10. 1 Sam. xv. 22. John xiv. 15, 21.
 John xv. 14. 1 John iii. 4.

|| Psal. xlvii. 8. Heb. x. 7. Rom. ii. 12, 13, 14. Heb. x. 38.
 Heb. xi. 6. Gal. ii. 20. John xv. 4, 5.

“essential properties and nature of things* :” and that “God’s interests are not in all respects independent on us :” that “our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature :” and that “self-love determines God to be studious of our good :” And that “God cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love †.”

These propositions are contrary to the holy scriptures ; in which it is asserted,—That God himself, in the wise purpose and counsel of his own will, laid down the whole plan of the nature and relation of things ; which he freely brings forth in his works of creation, providence and redemption. And though the precepts of the moral law are eternal and immutable ; in regard the holiness and perfection of God’s nature is such, that it cannot be his will that his creatures should do otherwise : Yet the scriptures also assert—That *God is our Lawgiver*, and affirm his absolute sovereignty and authority over us,—and consequently, that nothing can be a law to us but by his enacting ; and that what he enacts must be a law to us,—whether it be a moral precept, or a thing in its own nature indifferent ;—as is evident from the positive precept given to *Adam* at his creation ; and from other positive commands, both under the Old and New Testaments ;—which, although they were all wise and good, yet who can say that God was necessarily obliged by his own nature to enact them ; and that he could not possibly have done otherwise ? It is therefore grossly erroneous, to set up the nature and relation of things as a law above God himself ; and to maintain, that moral good and evil flow from the essential properties and nature of things,—and not from the holiness of God’s nature allenarly, together with his sovereign authority and will manifested in his law : As is evident from the following scriptures, [Eph. i. 5, 11. Rom. ix. 15,—24. Rev. iv. 11.]. The above propositions are also contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God, [*Conf.* Chap. viii. § 1. Chap. xix. § 5. Larger Cat. *Quest.* 12.].

From the word of God, and our Confession of Faith, we are also taught,—that *creatures can merit no good from God :*

* Enquiry, p. 37.

† Enquiry, P. 429, 430, 432.

God: And that he is not obliged to reward their services; and that all the rewards he has promised to any of them, are free and unmerited: And that they can have no fruition of God as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on his part; which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant: As also, that he whose name is JEHOVAH hath all life, glory, blessedness and goodness, in and of himself; and stands not in need of any of his creatures, nor derives any glory from them. Therefore it is grossly erroneous in Mr Campbell to affirm as above, "That God cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love." Yea, it is blasphemy in him to affirm,—“that our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature; and that God’s interests are not altogether independent on us *.”

The General Assembly 1736 having had Mr Campbell’s writings under their consideration, in which he has vented the above propositions; it is to be observed with regret, That “they find, with respect to the third article concerning self-love, he had declared he meant no more,—but that *our delight* in the glory and honour of God is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions: And are of opinion, that the examining and stating of the matter, as has been done by the committee for purity of doctrine,—is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first supposed Mr Campbell was guilty of; and do appoint that the matter rest here.” From all which, compared with the report of the committee, taken into the preamble of the act; it is very manifest, that the Assembly have adopted this proposition of Mr Campbell’s as in their opinion sound and orthodox, viz. *That our delight in the glory and honour of God, is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions.* And that they have taken it up in the same sense and meaning of the terms in which Mr Campbell, who delivered it, appears to have understood it, from his explanations then under consideration,—is as certain, as it is

* Luke xvii. 10. and xii. 32. Eph. ii. 5, 8. Rom. vi. 23. Job xxii. 2, 3. and xxxv. 7, 8. Acts xvii. 24, 25. Conf. chap. ii. § 1, 2. chap. vii. § 1. Larg. Cat. *Quest.* 7, 30. and from *Quest.* 67 to 75, inclusive.

is plain from the act itself, that the design of the Assembly and committee (in hearing and considering this declaration of Mr *Campbell's*, and the other explications he offered) was, *To do something that was sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first had supposed he was guilty of.*

But the above proposition, considered in a relation to his scheme of principles, and his explications then under consideration,—is manifestly gross and erroneous; and is very agreeable to the scheme of selfish love he has laid down in his *Enquiry*: as appears from his *further Explications*, and *Remarks* on the *Report* of the committee; which, together with this short declaration of his sentiments, were laid before the Assembly,—as his defences in the charge laid against him. He concludes his defences upon this head, in his further Explications, as follows *;

“ I hope the reverend committee will judge, that my opinion about the supreme motive—is in no degree an exclusion of the glory of God from being our chief end: and that true philosophy justifies my professing, as I have done in my (first) explications,—That the glory of God, or God in his glorious perfections and excellencies, is our chief and our ultimate end; and our prevailing desire after happiness in this glory of God, or in God an infinite good, the great fountain of all life and of all perfection,—is the supreme motive that excites us, and that animates our vigorous endeavours, to attain to him.” And in his remarks on the committee’s Report [page 47.], he asserts,—“ That the agent’s self-love, or a man’s own happiness, is the motive whereby he is excited to the pursuit of such sort of (good or virtuous) actions ”

The matter stands briefly thus.—The Assembly have absolved Mr *Campbell* from the charge of error that some at first supposed he was guilty of; in respect that, as to the 3d article concerning self-love, he had declared he meant no more,—but that “ our delight in the glory and honour of God was the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions.” But if the terms of this proposition are considered and compared with his defences

as

* Further Expl. p. 78, 79.

as above, it will be manifest,—that by the *honour and glory* of God, Mr Campbell does not understand the *declarative* glory of God; but *God in his glorious excellencies and perfections*, or *God an infinite Good*: and by our *delight* in the glory and honour of God, he understands our *prevailing desire after happiness* in this glory of God,—or in God an infinite Good. And when he affirms, that our delight in the honour and glory of God is the chief motive to all virtuous actions; he understands,—that the agent's self-love, or a man's own happiness in this glory of God, or in God an infinite good, is the chief motive whereby he is excited to the pursuit of religious and virtuous actions: which is the same thing with the error that some at first supposed he was guilty of, *viz. That self-love is the chief motive to all such actions.*

This might be further illustrate from what he says, page 70 and 78 of his *farther Explications*; and p. 40 and 48 of his *Remarks*. But the case is so plain of itself, and from what has been observed,—that nothing is necessary to be added; except to lament, that God has left this Church so far as to adopt this error: And that he so far deserted some worthy men, as not to notice it; and testify against it in a way of protestation, for the honour of truth. It shall only be further observed on this head,—that no other meaning can be imposed on the proposition contained in Mr Campbell's declaration, than what is above represented: because as he has not as yet renounced one proposition in all his writings, but defends every one of them; so it is manifest that he pleads,—That in eying God as our last end, we must consider him *merely as our chief good*; or the being who can fully satisfy our self-love, and gratify all our desires and appetites. And he makes God's benefits to us, or his promoting our happiness, the only ground and reason of our loving and worshipping him. And he plainly asserts,—That “seeing God acts for his self-interest, “we cannot act from a higher principle than our self-interest.” Yea, he confidently affirms,—That “his expressions on this subject do not go higher than his sentiments;” and that “his sentiments do not go beyond “the nature of things*.”

A

* See Enquiry, p. 429, 101, 102, 494, 389, 432. Rep. p. 58.

A like injury has been done to truth, by the committee's judging,—“ That the expressions objected against, are only *too high* on the side of self-love : Particularly his asserting self-love to be the sole principle, standard and motive of all religious actions.” And the Assembly's being of the opinion, “ That the committee's thus stating the matter is a sufficient caution against error,”—has thereby reduced his sentiments (concerning self-love's being the sole principle, standard and motive of all virtuous and religious actions,) to nothing else but to *too high expressions on the side of self-love*. And error being, in the nature of the thing, a false proposition or expression ; and an high expression, in common language, being nothing else but a truth set in a strong light : hereby the important truths of God, that relate to the principle, standard and motive of our actions,—are left wounded and bleeding in our streets,

2dly, Mr Campbell, in his discourse, proving *that the Apostles were no enthusiasts*,—has done manifest indignity to the work of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men, in their regeneration and conversion : In regard he affirms,—That “ many in the world look upon these manifestations which they think they have of the nature and excellencies of God, as supernaturally communicated to their minds ; and take these inward ravishments they feel upon such pretended revelations, to be all divine joys poured in upon them by the immediate hand of God himself :” and that “ it is evident, beyond all reasonable dispute,—that all such events may possibly have come about in a natural course and series of things,” (he makes no exception of any, but such as are of the miraculous and extraordinary kind), “ without any more immediate interposing of the Divinity, than there is when a man opens his eyes and beholds the sun in its glory at noon-day *.” He affirms,—That “ an extravagant conceit of being peculiarly blest with such supernatural communications from heaven, makes up the very life and soul of enthusiasm†.” He describes the enthusiast to be one “ who, in the course of his devotion, keeps not within the compass of reason ‡ :” whereby he makes *human reason*, in its present situation,

VOL. I,

P

situation,

* Disc. p. 2.

† Disc. p. 4.

‡ — p. 4.

situation, our *only guide* in our devotion. He also represents the Enthusiast to be one “who, in the course of his devotion, without attending to the dictates of reason,—imagines himself to be under the immediate influences of heaven; and therefore concludes, that these things which run strongly in his mind,—are immediately impressed upon him by the divine Spirit * :” and, in a ludicrous manner, represents it as a part of the character of the Enthusiasts,—That “they consult the throne of grace, lay their matters before the Lord, and implore his light and direction.” These and the like (says he) “are *terms of art* much used by them †.”

But the holy scriptures expressly assert the absolute necessity of a *supernatural work* of the Holy Spirit, for the renovation of our natures; and for manifesting unto us in a saving manner, the glorious excellencies of God in the person of Jesus Christ. This work of the Spirit, is common to all that are effectually called, and they are every one peculiarly blessed with it ‡. Also the will of God revealed in his word, and not our own depraved reason,—is that rule, within the compass of which we are to keep in our devotion ||. Likewise the scriptures affirm,—That an actual *influence* of the Holy Spirit is necessary, to enable us to walk with God in all the duties of holy obedience; and to impress the truths of God upon our minds §: and that it is our duty, not to *lean* to our *own understanding*, or reason; but to *consult* the *throne of grace*,—and to lay all our matters before the Lord, and implore his light and direction ¶: And *in every thing by prayer and supplication*, we ought to *make our requests known unto God* **.

It

* Disc. p. 26.

† *Ibid.* p. 10, 11.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6. and v. 17. Eph. i. 17, 18, 19. Psal. cxix. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Rom. viii. 7. Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. iv. 18. Luke vi. 43.

|| Heb. xi. 1, 6. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 21, 22, 23. Rom. xii. 2.

§ Rom. viii. 9, 14, 26, 27. Phil. ii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xvi. 7, 8, 9, 14. John xv. 5.

¶ Prov. iii. 5, 6. Jam. i. 5. Psal. xxxvii. 23. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

** Phil. iv. 6.

It is also the received doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—That a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for “enlightening our minds, spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God *.” And though “nothing is at any time to be added to the scripture, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men;” yet “the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word †.” Also, it is the doctrine of our Confession, agreeable to the word of God,—“That the light of nature is not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation;—which maketh the word of God most necessary; being given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life:” and therefore our corrupt and depraved reason is not the rule and standard of our devotion ‡:—And that “good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word;” and which “proceed from an heart purified by faith,” and “are done in a right manner according to the word;” and “to a right end, the glory of God:” and “that our works (or duties of obedience) as they are good, proceed from the Holy Spirit;”—that “our ability to do” them “is not at all of” ourselves, “but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that” we “may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces that” we “have already received,—there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in” us “to will and to do of his good pleasure;” and “yet” we “are not hereupon to grow negligent,—but to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in” us ||.

The General Assembly having had Mr *Campbell's* writings under their consideration, it is to be lamented,—that they have *intirely overlooked* the above, and such other gross propositions in his book concerning enthusiasm; whereby

* *Conf.* chap. x. § 1. *Larg. Cat. quest.* 67.

† *Conf.* chap. i. § 6.

‡ *Conf.* chap. i. § 1, 2. xvi. § 1. *Larg. Cat. quest.* 3. *Less. Cat. quest.* 2.

|| *Conf.* chap. xvi. § 1, 3, 5, 7. xix. § 7. xxi. § 3, 4.

whereby the supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men is reproached, and the serious exercise of godliness is ridiculed.

3dly, Mr Campbell in his writings has likewise asserted,—That “men, without revelation, cannot by their natural powers find out that there is a God*.” Which proposition directly contradicts the holy scriptures: in which we are taught,—That *the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that God hath made*;—and that *they who are without law (i. e. revelation,) have the work of the law written in their hearts, and do by nature the things contained in the law; their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another*:—Which could not be, without some knowledge and persuasion of the being of a God; of which they had natural convictions and impressions, as is plain from the words of the Apostle just now mentioned. It is likewise evident from the scriptures,—that God by his works had so clearly manifested his being and existence, his wisdom, power and goodness; that the *idolatry* of the heathen was thereby rendered a *sin against the light of nature*: and they were without excuse; because they did not so improve that light, which they had a natural power and ability to do, as to obtain more knowledge and veneration of their Creator and the author of their being,—according to the following scriptures, [Rom. i. 19, 20, 32. with Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15. Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3. Acts xvii. 24, to 27.]

The above proposition likewise overthrows the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; which is as follows: “The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation;”—that “the light of nature sheweth there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all,—is good, and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served,—with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might;”—and that “the light of nature, and
“ the

* Oratio, p. 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34. Enquiry, Pref. p. 28, 29.

“ the works of creation and providence,—do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God,—as to leave men inexcusable *.”

And seeing the committee for purity of doctrine were of opinion, and that upon good ground,—“ That this proposition is justly exceptionable ; as tending to darken and render doubtful the truth of natural religion,—and as appearing not to agree with the doctrine of the Apostle *Paul*, nor with the doctrine of our Confession of Faith :” There appears no manner of reason for the Assembly’s dismissing it, as if it were only a *doubtful expression* or proposition, which may be construed in an *erroneous sense* ; however sound it may be in itself, or however well intended. By which conduct of the Assembly, the cause of truth hath suffered exceedingly ; in regard that, by the above proposition, the first principles of *natural religion* are attacked and subverted.

4thly, Further, Mr *Campbell* in his writings has asserted,—That “ the laws of nature, in themselves, are a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness ;” and that “ our observing of these laws, is the great mean and instrument of our real and lasting felicity †.” Which propositions do evidently contradict the holy scriptures : In which we are taught,—That the word of God is the only rule of faith and obedience ; and that men cannot be accepted in God’s sight, nor be intitled to future and lasting felicity, by framing their lives according to the law of nature. And though holiness be absolutely necessary to make us meet for communion with God,—both in grace here, and in glory hereafter ; yet the *righteousness of Christ*, or his obedience and satisfaction, imputed to us, and received and rested upon by faith of the operation of God,—is the great mean of our blessedness and happiness begun in time, and consummate in heaven ‡.

And

* *Conf.* chap. xxi. § 1. i. § 1. *Larg. Cat. quest 2.*

† *Disc. Pref.* p. 5, 6.

‡ *Gal.* iii. 21, 22. and vi. 16. *Rom.* viii. 3. and iii. 20, 21. *Ma.* xlii. 6. *Rom.* x. 6, 9. *Gal.* iii. 11. *Acts* iv. 12. *John* xiv. 6. *Eph.* ii. 12. *John* xvii. 3. *John* iv. 22. *1 Cor.* xvi. 22. *Gal.* i. 6, 7, 8. *John* iii. 36. *Acts* x. 43. and xvii. § 1. *Rom.* iii. 22, to 28. and v. 6, 7 8 *2 Cor.* v. 19, 21. *Eph.* i. 7. *Phil.* iii. 7, 8, 9.

And the above propositions manifestly subvert the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, viz. That “ man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by the covenant of works ; the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace :” that “ men not professing the Christian religion—cannot be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature :” and that those “ whom God effectually calleth, he freely justifieth ; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them,—but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith ; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God *.”

A very considerable injury has been done to the truths of God, by the committee’s making the above propositions no other but *unguarded expressions* ; and by the Assembly’s giving it as their opinion,—“ that the committee had so stated the matter, as is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first supposed Mr *Campbell* was guilty of ;”—and their dismissing the said propositions, which were under their consideration, as is done in the close of their act ; as if they were only *doubtful expressions*, or propositions which may be construed in an erroneous sense,—however sound they may be in themselves, or however well intended:—And this, notwithstanding it is most manifest from the expressions themselves, and connection of purposes in the preface to his discourse (in which he delivers these propositions),—and from the relation they stand in to the principles of the Deists which he there proposes to refute ; that he must be understood to speak of mankind in their present situation : And that he there, and in the very next page to that in which he lays down the above mentioned propositions, expressly pleads for the necessity or fitness of revelation,—only to give a sufficient information of the laws of nature, in their full compass and latitude ; and of all things necessary to work upon the passions of men, and to engage them to pursue and observe them : And that in his Enquiry (page 221.) he asserts,—that

* Conf. chap. vii. § 3. x. § 4. xi. § 1. Larg. Cat. quest. 60, 73.

that “the sentiments of all fair and honest enquirers do
“certainly agree, in all important points of religion that
“are of common concern; to which the common parent
“of mankind has proportioned the common understand-
“ing of human nature:” And that he has not yet confessed
one blunder or impertinence, in the way he has taken of
managing the arguments against the Deists,—or the con-
cessions he has made them; or retracted any one of his
propositions or expressions, but defends them all most
keenly: And that any declarations he has made, from which
the Assembly or committee would infer,—that it is not his
meaning that a supernatural revelation of a Saviour and
faith in him are superfluous, and not necessary to the happi-
ness of fallen man, (as to which heretics have been abun-
dantly liberal, and with the greatest cunning and artifice,
—on occasion of warping in their own errors, or screening
themselves from danger,)—must necessarily be understood
in an agreeableness to, and consistency with all these other
unsound propositions to which he tenaciously adheres.
From all which it is very manifest, that these propositions,
as they are laid in his writings, and were under the Assem-
bly’s consideration,—are most dangerous, unsound, and
erroneous: And that the Assembly, by their conduct in this
matter,—have given * deep wound to the cause of truth,
which cannot enough be regretted and lamented.

5thly, Further, Mr *Campbell* in his writings has asserted,
—That “the Apostles do not seem to have had any noti-
“on of our Saviour’s *divinity*, at the time of his crucifixi-
“on:” And that “they did not apprehend him under
“that character in which he is represented to us by the
“Apostle *John*, in the first chapter of his gospel,—and by
“*Paul* in his epistles; before they began their public
“ministry *:”—That the Apostles, being “violently pre-
“possessed in favour of a worldly kingdom,” looked upon
the carrying it on as the only end of the Messiah’s coming
to the world; and “expected this, and this only from
“him †:”—And that the Apostles, in the interval betwixt
Christ’s death and resurrection, “were greatly offended
“at him in their hearts; as being, in their opinion, a
“downright cheat and deceiver,—who had once flattered
“them

* Disc. p. 31, 53. † Disc. p. 33, 53. and Preface, p. 22.

“ them with mighty hopes, but now had left them under
 “ all the agonies of shame and disappointment :” And,
 that “ they all looked upon him as an impostor *.”

All the above propositions do directly contradict the
 holy scriptures ; in which it is expressly affirmed,—That
 the disciples and followers of Christ beheld him in the glory
 of his divine person ; they *beheld his glory, the glory as of
 the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,*—
 and that even while he dwelt among them, in the days of
 his humiliation : That they looked upon him to be the
Messiah, the Son of the living God ; a discovery which *flesh
 and blood* (that is, human reason) had not made to them,
 but the *Father* : That they expected heaven and eternal
 life from him : That *religious worship* was claimed by him,
 and paid to him, while he tabernacled among them : That
 all the disciples declared their faith of his *Omniscience* : and
 that one of them, in presence of all the rest, before they
 entered on their public ministry,—professed his faith in
 him as *his Lord and his God*. And therefore it is most
 false and grossly erroneous to say,—“ That the Apostles
 “ had no notion of our Lord’s divinity, before they began
 “ their public ministry ; and that they expected nothing
 “ from him but a temporal deliverance †.” And the scrip-
 tures likewise assert,—That our Lord Jesus Christ had
manifested his Father’s name to his disciples ; that is, all
 the purposes of his grace, as centring in himself the Medi-
 ator : That they had *received* his words, and knew there-
 by that he *came out from the Father*, and *believed* that the
 Father had sent him ‡ : And that they considered their Lord
 as the *Messiah, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets
 did write* || : And that they looked upon him, in the very
 interval betwixt his death and resurrection,—to be *a pro-
 phet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people* §.
 And also, that the *faith* of none of them, no not of Peter,
 did fail ¶. And therefore it is most false and grossly errone-
 ous

* Preface to Disc. p. 21, 23.

† John i. 14. Mat. xvi. 16, 17. John vi. 68, 69. and xiv. 1.
 Mat. ii. 2, 11. John ix. 35. to 38. John xvi. 30. and xxi. 17. and
 xx. 28.

‡ John xvii.

|| John i. 41, 45.

§ Luke xxiv. 19.

¶ Luke xxii. 32.

ous to say,—that the apostles, in the interval betwixt Christ's death and resurrection, looked upon their Lord and Master as a *downright* cheat and impostor.

The above propositions are likewise contrary to the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, *viz.* That “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—“are the One only, living, true and eternal God; the “same in substance, equal in power and glory * :” That “Christ the Mediator is very God and very man, of one “substance, and equal with the Father;” and that “the “benefits of his redemption were communicated unto the “elect in all ages from the beginning of the World,—in “and by these promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he “was revealed †: That “they whom God hath effectually “called, can never totally fall away from the state of grace; “but shall certainly persevere therein to the end ‡.” And that, though “the Catholic Church hath been sometimes “more, sometimes less visible;” yet “there shall be al- “ways a Church on earth, to worship God according to “his will §.”

The cause of truth hath suffered exceedingly, and received a deep wound; from the Assembly's giving it as their opinion,—That the above sentiments vented by Mr *Campbell*, “contain only his conjectural opinion concern- “ing the inward sentiments of other men; and that our “Confession and Catechisms teach nothing concerning “these matters:” As also, that his design was,—“to give “the greater strength to his argument, for vindicating “the Apostles from enthusiasm:”—And their dismissing these gross and erroneous propositions as *doubtful expressions only*, which may be construed in an erroneous sense; however sound they may be in themselves, and however well intended.

This their conduct cannot be enough lamented, if it is considered,—that the above propositions are hereby purged of all manner of falshood or unsoundness in themselves; seeing what is false in itself, can give no strength to an argument: Nor can it be the least excuse for a man's ven-

VOL. I.

Q

ting

* *Conf.* chap. ii. § 1, 3. *Larg. Cat. quest. 9.*† *Conf.* chap. viii. § 2. 6.‡ *Conf.* chap. xvii. § 1.§ *Conf.* chap. xxv. § 4, 5.

ting unsound propositions, that he designed by them to give strength to his argument. That these propositions contradict the holy scriptures, has been shown in the above passages that have been cited; and this is enough to determine them to be unsound and erroneous. But, if the strain and general design of the scriptures is considered, they may be said to contradict the whole word of God; as well as every chapter of our Confession of Faith. For it is a thing most certain, that if the apostles of Christ, (who constantly attended his ministry,—of whom the greatest things are said of all others, as to their proficiency by their instruction *; and to whom he expounded all things privately, that he spoke openly in parables);—if these however had no notion of his *divinity*, and expected nothing but a *temporal deliverance* from him,—and, in the interval betwixt his death and resurrection, looked upon him as a cheat and impostor; no better opinion can be justly maintained of any then living.—And it may be given up to Mr *Campbell*, That one may be a true believer (for such were all his disciples except Judas) who doth not yet believe the divinity of the Son of God; and consequently, that the Church may be constitute of a company of infidels under a christian name;—which is very agreeable to the *Socinian* and *Deistical* schemes: It may be likewise given up to him,—That one may have a true and saving faith, as the disciples certainly had; and yet fall totally away from the same, into the grossest infidelity;—for grosser cannot be imagined, than that all the disciples should look upon their Lord as a downright cheat and impostor:—Both which are contrary to the above passages of the Confession, and the scriptures these articles are founded upon. And from Mr *Campbell's* above principles it follows,—that [John i. 14.], and all the other declarations and confessions that the Apostles in the days of his humiliation made,—concerning their faith of his true, proper, and supreme Deity; are nothing to the purpose: and that no argument can be drawn for the same, from any such declarations and confessions that are recorded in the four gospels.

All

* John xvii 6, 7, 8.

All the above-mentioned are some of the many dangerous expressions and propositions, that ly scattered through Mr *Campbell's* writings. And this *Presbytery* taking into their serious consideration,—the dishonour that is done to God, the injury that is done to his truths, by all the foresaid propositions; and also considering, that many may be in danger of being tainted with the same, in this day of general apostasy and defection from the truths of God: Therefore, and for all the several grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—They did, and hereby do C O N D E M N all and every one of the foresaid propositions maintained and defended by the said Mr *Campbell*; as contrary to the word of God, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms: —particularly his affirming, That “ the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is “ self-love, interest or pleasure:” That “ self-love is the “ great cause, or the first spring of all our several actions “ and motions; which way soever they may be directed;” and that “ it is universally the first spring in every rational mind, that awakens her powers; begins “ her motions, and carries her on to action:”—whereby the vitals of practical religion are attacked and undermined. Also, his asserting,—That *self-love is the only standard, measure and rule of all virtue and religion; and of all our several actions and motions, which way soever they may happen to be directed*;—and, That “ self-interest or “ pleasure is the only standard by which we can judge of “ the virtue, (*i. e.* the value and goodness) of any action “ whatsoever:” That “ moral virtue flows from the essential properties and nature of things:” That “ God’s “ interests are not in all respects independent on us;” That “ our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature;” and, That “ self-love determines God to be studious of “ our good;” and, That “ he cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love.” By all which the authority of God, the great lawgiver, is disparaged: His self-sufficiency is

is blasphemously impugned ; and he is made a debtor to his creatures, being necessarily obliged to reward their service and obedience.—Likewise his representing as *Enthusiasts*, all who pretend to have obtained *supernatural manifestations of the nature and excellencies of God*, that are not of the extraordinary and miraculous kind ; and “ who “ imagine themselves, in the course of their devotion, to “ be under the influences of heaven ;”—and that “ con- “ sulting the throne of grace, laying all our matters before “ the Lord, and imploring his light and direction,—are “ terms of art much used by Enthusiasts :” By all which the work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men in effectual calling, and the spiritual exercises of all such as are exercised to godliness,—are reviled, traduced, and reproached. Also his affirming,—That “ men cannot by their natu- “ ral powers, without the aid of revelation, find out that “ there is a God :” Whereby the first principles of natural religion are wickedly attacked. Likewise, his affirming,—That “ our observing of the laws of nature, is the “ great mean or instrument of our real and lasting felicity ;” and that “ the laws of nature in themselves are a “ certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to “ happiness ;—however revelation be fit or necessary, to “ give sufficient information of the laws of nature in their “ full compass and latitude ; and of all things necessary “ to work upon the passions of men, to engage them to “ pursue and observe them :” Whereby the peculiar truths of the gospel, concerning the person and mediation of Christ and the whole work of the Spirit, are wickedly subverted ; and such a *sufficiency* is ascribed to *natural religion*, as gives up the cause of truth to *Deists* and *Socinians*. And likewise his affirming,—That the *Apostles* of our Lord, before his resurrection, *knew not his divinity* : and that *they expected nothing from the Messiah, but a worldly kingdom or a temporal deliverance* ; and that, in the interval betwixt his death and resurrection, *they looked upon him as a cheat and impostor* :—Whereby the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is subtilly undermined ; and the arguments drawn for the Deity of the Son of God, from the declarations and confessions made by the disciples in

in the days of his humiliation, are wholly enervate. And the PRESBYTERY did, and hereby do declare,—That all the above propositions, tenets and principles, maintained and defended by Mr *Campbell*,—are contrary, as said is, to the word of God and our Confession of Faith and Catechisms: And that they are gross, dangerous, and pernicious errors.

And in regard that the late General Assembly have neither censured the broacher and venter of the above dangerous errors, nor condemned any one of them; but have dismissed the process against him, by declaring,—“ That the examining and stating of the matter, as was “ done by the committee for purity of doctrine, is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first “ supposed Mr *Campbell* was guilty of ;” without giving any formal judgment, or sentence upon the said committee’s report: And in regard the committee in their said report, and the Assembly in their act and sentence,—declared that *they are satisfied, Mr Campbell has a sound meaning*, in the several propositions they had under their consideration;—and particularly, that they are satisfied with the explication he gave of the article concerning self-love; namely, “ That he meant no more, but that our delight “ in the glory and honour of God was the chief motive “ of all virtuous and religious actions :” And this proposition, now *adopted* by the Assembly, being the very same with Mr *Campbell’s* above condemned principle; “ that self-love is the great cause or the first spring of all “ our several motions and actions, which way soever they “ are directed :” Therefore this *Presbytery* did, and hereby do declare, for the grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—That the foresaid proposition, adopted by the Assembly, is a gross and dangerous error. And this Presbytery likewise considering,—That it is the duty of the judicatories of the church to proceed in a regular course of process, and in the due exercise of discipline, against erroneous and heretical seducers; according to the rule and direction
given

given by the Apostle, *An heretic after the first and second admonition reject*: And in regard the Assemblies of this Church have never put a libel into the said Mr Campbell's hands, in order to reclaim him from the gross and dangerous errors he has fallen into; or for rejecting and casting him out, if found obstinately adhering to his dangerous principles and tenets: Therefore they did, and hereby do declare, That the whole conduct of the last Assembly, in dismissing this affair in the manner above narrated,—is a deep wound given to truth, and a lamentable step of defection; and may be justly reckoned amongst the signs, grounds, and causes of the Lord's indignation against this whole Church and land.

ARTICLE IV. *Another attack upon Scripture-doctrine.*

III. **T**HE scripture doctrine of this and all the reformed Churches is subtilly undermined, and wickedly subverted,—in a print lately published, under the title of *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised and rendered fitter for general use*: In regard the Reviser, by the several omissions, alterations and additions he has thought fit to make in the Assembly's Catechism,—not only shakes the pillars of our reformation from Popery; with respect to the scriptures, as the only rule of faith and practice,—and the doctrines concerning justification, the sacrament of our Lord's supper, and the just desert of every sin;—but also boldly strikes at the whole scheme of divine revelation, contained in the said Catechism; by casting the same into such a shape and mould as is very agreeable to the *Deistical, Arian, Socinian* and *Arminian* schemes. Hence the doctrines taught in the Assembly's Catechism, concerning the holy scriptures being the *only* rule of faith and practice; concerning the holy Trinity, and the decrees of God; concerning the covenants of works and grace; together with original sin, and its effects upon mankind,—and the evil nature and desert of all sin, as contrary to the authority and holiness of God: also the doctrines concerning the

the person of Christ,—his two distinct natures, and their personal union; concerning the nature, end and design of his sufferings,—as a real and proper satisfaction to the justice of God; concerning special grace,—and the peculiar and supernatural energy of the Holy Spirit in the application of the purchased redemption, in our conversion and effectual calling: likewise the doctrines concerning the perseverance of the saints, and the perpetual obligation of the whole moral law;—(especially when the obligation to obedience is not derived by the Reviser from the authority of God as he is JEHOVAH, whose perfections are infinite and whose dominion is over all; but only from the special and peculiar benefits received from him): Together with the doctrine contained in the Catechism, concerning the regard that Christians should pay to the first day of the week as our Christian Sabbath:—All these scripture doctrines concerning the above particular heads, as they are plainly laid down in the Catechism, are subtilly and wickedly subverted by the Reviser.

This PRESBYTERY would not have taken such particular notice of the foreſaid *Catechism revised*; were it not that the scheme of doctrine delivered in it is not only adapted, but very agreeable to the corrupt and depraved taste of the present age. And they cannot but observe it with regret, that revealed religion is so much despised by many; and that the holy scriptures are little regarded, and the law of nature cried up as sufficient to direct men to true felicity and blessedness: And the supernatural operation of the Spirit, and his peculiar energy in the conversion of sinners,—are burlesqued. And many who profess some regard to revealed religion, according to the Reviser's scheme,—despise the necessity, truth, and excellency of the satisfaction of Christ; and the necessity of the imputation of his righteousness for our justification in the sight of God: Together with the absolute need there is of the renovation of our natures by supernatural grace, and of a vital union with Christ; in order to the bringing forth the fruits of holiness,—in heart, life, and conversation. Yea these, and the like doctrines, appear to be nauseous to not a few,—whose character and profession obliges them to publish and recommend them: When instead of the special and peculiar

peculiar doctrines of the gospel, (that concern the person, offices, and mediation of Christ,—salvation by the free grace of God, and the supernatural energy of his Spirit); mens *sincere endeavours* are, according to the Reviser's scheme, cried up,—either as concurring with the Spirit of God in regeneration and effectual calling, or as pre-existent conditions unto the application of the purchased redemption;—and the holy Spirit of God is only regarded as an assistant and help unto us, in these our sincere endeavours. Faith, repentance, and what they call sincere obedience,—are preached, as the ground of our right and title to life and happiness: And, instead of enforcing duties of obedience to the law from gospel principles and motives, a scheme of morality is taught which has *self-interest* for its principal and leading motive; and that has little or no respect to Christ, as its author and ground of acceptance,—or to the glory of God as its end.

ARTICLE V. *The negligence of the General Assemblies concerning Error.*

IV. **A**LTHOUGH the above dangerous and pernicious errors have been broached, and are spreading through this Church and land: Yet the standard of a plain and faithful Testimony has not, to this day, been lifted up against them; for the honour of Christ, and the vindication of his injured truth. This *sinful negligence* and omission of the judicatories of this Church, in a matter of such importance, (wherein the honour of God, the glory of the Redeemer, the maintainance and preservation of the purity of doctrine,—and consequently, not only the souls of the present, but also of the rising generation, are all so deeply concerned); may be reckoned one of the most grievous and *weighty grounds and causes of the Lord's indignation and wrath, against this whole Church and land.*

As for instance, when reports were spread at first concerning Mr John Simson his teaching and venting error; the late reverend and worthy Mr James Webster, having taken notice of the same in the presbytery and synod whereof he was a member, and they refusing to give their concurrence therein,—he tabled the affair before the General Assembly 1714, desiring them to take trial thereof as their proper province,

province. But the said Assembly were so far from assisting him in this matter, that they appointed the said Mr *James Webster*, or any who will join with him in charging Mr *John Simson* professor of divinity at *Glasgow* with error,—to table their complaint before the presbytery where he lives: Allowing any person or persons who are willing, to give Mr *Webster* assistance in point of form; but declaring that, if they engage with him in that cause, they shall be accounted libellers*.

Accordingly, Mr *Webster* having libelled Mr *Simson* before the presbytery of *Glasgow*, and the said Mr *Simson* having given in his subscribed answers and defences; wherein are contained the above mentioned dangerous and erroneous propositions: The process was brought before the Assembly 1715, who appointed a committee to take trial of the case; continuing the load and weight of the prosecution upon Mr *Webster*, as the party pursuing and accusing. In like manner the Assembly 1716 continued the process in the same channel, till it was concluded by the Assembly 1717: Who, instead of condemning particularly the gross and dangerous errors owned by Mr *Simson*, and inflicting due censure upon him; did not so much as rebuke him for venting the same:—Although they were so far convinced of the truth of the libel against him, that by their act they find,—“ That he had vented some opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, and that had given more occasion to strife than to the promoting of edification; and that he had used some expressions that bear, and are used by adversaries in an unsound sense; —and that he had adopted some hypotheses, different from what are commonly used among orthodox divines, that are not evidently founded on scripture,—and tend to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature; which undue advancement of reason and nature, is always to the disparagement of Revelation and efficacious free grace: Therefore they prohibit and discharge the said Mr *Simson* to use such expressions; or to teach, preach or otherwise vent such opinions, propositions or hypotheses as aforesaid.”

VOL. I.

R

This

* See *Index* of unprinted acts of Assembly 1714.

This extensive lenity, or rather sinful remissness and slackness,—in not inflicting due censure upon one who had given such evident discoveries of his corrupt and erroneous principles, and whom it was unsafe to trust any more with the education of youth for the holy ministry,—encouraged him to go on in venting and teaching his pernicious errors; till at length, in a way of righteous judgment from the Lord on this sinful and lukewarm Church,—he is so far left of God, as to attack and impugn the Supreme Deity of the great God our Saviour. And though it was found clearly proven by the several Assemblies who had this process under their consideration, That he had vented and taught the above-mentioned propositions; whereby he attempted to divest the Son of God of his true and Supreme Deity, and thereby blasphemed that *name which is above every name*: Yet the concern of this Church for this foundation-truth, did rise no higher than a bare *suspension* of the *blasphemer* from teaching or preaching, —and the exercise of any ecclesiastical power and function; leaving the door open, to another Assembly to relax him from the said sentence.

In like manner, during the dependence of the foresaid process, the Committee of Assembly found it clearly proven,—that he had contravened the injunction of Assembly 1717, in venting the dangerous errors which they had discharged him to teach: Yet the Assembly 1729 concluded the process against him, without taking any notice of these gross errors. And though there is just ground to fear that too many are tainted with them, whereby the purity of doctrine is in the greatest danger; yet no regard is had to these things, but all is passed over by our Assemblies since that time with a profound silence: Except what was done by the Assembly 1736, in their *act concerning preaching*; wherein several weighty and important truths are asserted,—and several necessary and seasonable directions are given, both to Ministers and Preachers. Yet the many gross and dangerous errors, vented and taught by Mr *Simson*, are never particularly condemned; neither is there any plain and faithful warning emitted against them. Also, the foresaid Assembly, in dismissing
Mr

Mr *Campbell's* affair by an after act, in the manner that is already observed,—have so far enervate and weakned their own act about preaching; that the good effects thereof, which otherwise might have been hoped for, cannot be now expected.

The above omission of our General Assemblies concerning doctrine, must be reckoned the more culpable,—in regard they have been frequently addressed, by representations and instructions from synods and presbyteries, (and also from Ministers and Elders, and people through the land); representing the necessity of a particular condemnation of the several dangerous errors and blasphemies vented by Mr *Simson*,—and that a solemn warning might be emitted, discovering the evil and dangerous tendency of the same: Yet nothing of this kind is done. And though it be a debt which one generation owes to another, to transmit the truths of God in their purity to posterity; and to deliver off their hand to the rising generation, these truths that are particularly assaulted and opposed,—with some more peculiar and solemn testimony unto them: Yet injured truth continues to ly wounded and bleeding in our streets, without justice done her by the Church representative: To whom it belongs in a special manner to publish and declare, to uphold and defend all the truths of God delivered in his word; against open and avowed enemies, or secret underminers of the same. And therefore the above sinful omission must needs be reckoned an injury doen to truth; an injustice done to our posterity: And of a very dangerous tendency towards the hardening of such as may be tainted with the above errors, as well as opening a door for the spreading of this corrupt leaven among others.

ARTICLE VI. *Other public Evils, since the Accession*
of GEORGE I.

V. **B**ESIDES the above mentioned pernicious errors, which like a flood have overspread this Church,—particularly since our deliverance from the late unnatural and wicked rebellion; and which were never the sin nor trial

trial of the Church of Scotland, in any of our former periods of apostasy and defection ;—our declinings and backslidings have increased since that time, by the several dangerous thrusts and wounds we have given with our own hands to our presbyterian church-government and discipline ; whereby our ruin and destruction, if mercy prevent not, is like to proceed from ourselves : Of which the following particular instances are offered.

1. No due caution and care has been taken in licensing young men, as *probationers* for the holy ministry ; nor a suitable regard had to the qualifications, required in the scriptures and acts of our General Assemblies,—of such as are to be employed in preaching the gospel. Hence it is come to pass that many have been licensed, who, by their general and loose *harangues* in the pulpit, discover their ignorance of Christ and him crucified ; and their estrangement from the power of godliness : while there is as little of Christ to be found in their sermons, as in the systems of heathen morals.

2. The corrupt and *undue entry* of many into the holy ministry, is another of the public sins and epidemic evils of the present time. The *acceptance of presentations* has become fashionable, for several years bypast ; and, instead of giving a check to this corrupt course and practice, the judicatories of the Church have so far encouraged the same,—that the settlement of presentees has been appointed, when almost the whole parish was dissenting and reclaiming ;—contrary to the word of God, and the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church founded thereon : Yea, settlements have been appointed in a very arbitrary manner over dissenting congregations, even when there was no presentation in the case. And when presbyteries concerned have refused to proceed to such violent settlements, *committees* have been appointed by the *commission* ; and invested with a presbyterial power, to try and ordain men to the holy ministry. And likewise, many congregations through the land are still groaning under the weight of such arbitrary and violent intrusions : And neither the intruded, nor such as have had an active hand in the intrusion,—give any evidence to this day of their repentance
and

and sorrow for the violence they have done to the flock and heritage of God, who are thereby scattered and broken.

3. The conduct of the General Assemblies of the Church has not been equal and *impartial* in matters of doctrine: As for instance, in the case of Mr *John Simson*. The processes carried on against him were kept several years in dependence before the judicatories. And particularly the last process, which concerned his impugning the *Supreme Deity* of the *Son of God*,—was transmitted to the several presbyteries of this Church by the Assembly 1728; that their judgment might be reported to the ensuing Assembly, about the censure that was due to the said Mr *Simson*. Though the evidence was so clear, that the discipline of the Church should have been summarily exercised upon him.—But the General Assembly 1720, condemned a bundle of propositions containing important matters of doctrine; when the affair had been under the consideration only of two different meetings of that Assembly, and a committee of the whole house.

This very sudden step of the said Assembly occasioned a *representation* to be given in to the Assembly 1721, by several Ministers of this Church; bearing,—That it appeared to them, that many gospel truths were wounded by the foresaid condemnatory act and sentence: And the Assembly 1722—saw themselves obliged to explain and declare their minds at length, concerning these important doctrines then upon the field; in the terms and expressions used in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. But still a wound was given to truth, by the act of the foresaid Assembly 1720 relating to doctrine: Particularly by their condemning as erroneous the two following propositions,—“That, as the law is the covenant of works, believers
“are wholly and altogether set free from it;” and,
“That believers are set free, both from the commanding
“and condemning power of the covenant of works.” Though both these propositions are evident from the word of God, and expressly contained in our Confession of Faith*; yet the said Assembly thought fit summarily to condemn them. As this sudden and precipitant stroke, at that spiritual

* *Conf.* chap. xix. § 6. *Larg. Cat. quest.* 97.

ritual freedom and liberty wherewith the Son of God hath made his people free,—could not but be affecting to many Ministers and Christians through the land, as well as to the forefaid Ministers; so the Assembly 1722 found themselves obliged to declare,—“ That it is a precious gospel truth, That believers are free from the law as it is a covenant of works :” Yet it is matter of regret, that the credit of acts of Assembly is so much stood upon,—that the Assembly 1722 did not repeal that act and deed of the Assembly 1720; whereby, what they themselves owned to be a precious truth, is in exprefs terms condemned.

4. Several *arbitrary* acts and decisions have been framed and passed by the General Assemblies of this Church; whereby the government of the house of God has been undermined, and the discipline sinfully perverted: Such as the act of Assembly 1732, concerning the planting of vacant Churches; which lodges the decisive power of electing Ministers in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors,—no other qualification being required of the said heritors but their being Protestants, however much disaffected to the government both in Church and State. Again, the Assembly 1733 rebuked and admonished Mr *Erskine* at their bar,—for impugning several act of Assemblies and proceedings of church-judicatories, in his sermon at the opening of the synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*; that is, for testifying against the act of Assembly 1732, and other violent proceedings of judicatories at that time. And when he, with other three Ministers, protested against the said sentence for their own just and necessary exoneration; high censures were threatned, and actually inflicted upon them; because they had not freedom to retract their protestation, and profess their sorrow for the same,—as required by the said Assembly: Whereby two sinful and unwarrantable terms of ministerial communion were imposed:—First, *That no Minister of this Church should testify from the pulpit, against acts of Assembly and proceedings of Church-judicatories; even though they were such as had a direct tendency to undermine our constitution: Secondly, That no Minister or Member of this Church should PROTEST, for their own exoneration, against acts, sentences or decisions of the supreme judicatory; even though they should nearly affect*

affect the public cause of God, and restrain ministerial freedom and faithfulness (as was the present case) in testifying against the sins and defections of a backsliding Church.

Further, the said Assembly, by another act,—discharging the Ministers of the presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under pain of the highest censure, to admit any of the parish of *Kinross* to sealing-ordinances without the permission of the present incumbent, who was intruded upon them,—imposed another *sinful term* of ministerial communion upon the Ministers of this Church; whereby they are *bound up* from dispensing sealing-ordinances, under pain of the highest censure, to such of the Lord's people as have not freedom to submit to the ministry of intruders: And thereby likewise imposed a new and unwarrantable term of Christian communion; when all such as cannot own intruders to be their lawful pastors, are actually excommunicated from sealing-ordinances;—which is a plain homologating of a piece of tyranny which was exercised in the former persecuting period; this being one of the grounds of peoples withdrawing from Prelatic incumbents, that they were intruded upon them without their call or consent.

5. Tho' the Assembly 1734 did repeal the act of Assembly 1732 anent the settlement of Ministers; yet the said act was not condemned as contrary to the word of God: And the constitutions of this Church, contained in her books of discipline and acts of former Assemblies; particularly act of Assembly at *Glasgow* 1638,—“discharging
“any person to be intruded in any office of the kirk,
“contrary to the will of the congregation to which they
“are appointed.” And though some stop was put by the fore said Assembly, to the violent measures and proceedings of some former Assemblies and their commissions; Yet the act of Assembly 1733, (restraining ministerial freedom and faithfulness, and censuring the Ministers and members of this Church—for protesting for their own exoneration against such decisions of the General Assembly as are prejudicial to the cause and interest of Christ in this land), stands to this day unrepealed; as also the act of the same Assembly

Assembly with reference to the presbytery of *Dunfermline*.—excommunicating both Ministers and members of this Church, in case they do not either concur with or submit to the ministry of intruders. Nor is it any apology for a sinful act or decision, whereby a Church is involved in the guilt of transgressing the ordinances and institutions of the Lord,—that there is a connivance at the contrary practice.

6. All the above-mentioned steps of defection and apostasy, are followed with many evident signs and causes of the Lord's departure; such as abounding profanity, impiety, and the vilest immoralities of all sorts,—wherewith the land is greatly polluted: The profane diversions of the stage, together with night assemblies and balls, these sinful occasions of wantonness and prodigality,—are encouraged and countenanced in the most considerable cities of the nation.—Likewise an *idolatrous picture* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was well received in some remarkable places of the land *. And though popish errors and delusions abound more and more, and the abominable idolatry of the *mass* is openly frequented in many corners of this land; yet no proper nor effectual remedies are applied against this growing evil: And particularly, church-discipline is not duly exercised against Papists; according to former laudable acts and constitutions of this Church, And of late, the *penal statutes* against *witches* have been repealed; contrary to the express letter of the law of God, *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live* †:—*There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire; or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer: For all that do these are an abomination to the Lord: And because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee* ‡.

Also,

* This was a large *Crucifix*, or a pretended fine Picture of our Lord upon the Cross; which had been very lately carried about by a Romish Missionary for a show.

† Exod. xxii. 18.

‡ Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 12,

Also, the common impressions of God are in a great measure worn off the spirits of men; the power of religion is daily decaying through the land. The very form of it is despised by many, and rested upon by others; which is occasioned by the general contempt of the gospel,—and neglecting the great salvation, brought near therein to sinners of all sorts: upon which account the Lord is provoked to withdraw, in a great measure, from his own ordinances,—and to restrain the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit; whereby multitudes, under the means of grace, are lying scattered like *dry bones about the grave's mouth*:—A sad evidence of the departure of a Spirit of prayer; and of mourning for our own sins, and the abominations that are done in the midst of us: Especially when it is considered,—that a dreadful spirit of security, deadness and indifferency prevails among all ranks of persons; notwithstanding of the many evident symptoms of the Lord's anger and displeasure gone forth against us.

Our *Nobility and Barons*, who have sometimes appeared with an heroic zeal and resolution for maintaining and advancing a work of reformation,—have generally *burst* the Lord's *bands* asunder, and have *cast* his *cords* from them; in so much, that the very form of family-worship is either despised or neglected by the most part of them. Our *burgesses and commons*, who have made a zealous profession of the truths of the gospel,—for the most part *know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God*. The *Ministers* of the House of God, who have sometimes set the trumpet to their mouth, and shewn to the House of Jacob their sin and their transgression,—are under a more than an ordinary restraint of the Spirit of God; and he that speaks against the evils of this degenerate day, *makes himself a prey*. Every one of us, in many, if not in all the above particular instances,—are some way or other deeply involved in the provocation: The sun is gone down upon us, *we do not behold our signs*; and *there is not a prophet, nor any that knows the time how long*.

It may be mentioned with regret, that in the two several acts for *national fasting*, appointed by the late commissions,—there is no particular searching into the grounds

and causes of the Lord's indignation and controversy against this Church and land, in former and present times : There is no mention made of the ruining acts and constitutions above named ; nor of the sinful silence of judicatories, in omitting a faithful testimony against the growing and spreading errors of the times ; nor of the injuries done to the heritage and flock of God, by the violent intrusions that have been made upon them,—which have raised a cry of violence and oppression from all corners of the land. A cry is gone up to heaven, even to his ears who hath said,—*For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise ; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him* *. When the sins of the present times are not particularly mourned over ; it cannot be expected that there will be any faithful enquiry into, or acknowledgment of the defections and backslidings of former periods : For which we have just ground to apprehend,—that the Lord may pursue a quarrel and controversy against *sinful, gospel-despising and covenant-breaking* Scotland. Yea, instead of acknowledging the sins and defections of the present times ; those who have had an active hand in them, continue to justify their abominations : And, by the whole of their conduct and behavior, declare,—That they only want an opportunity to re-act the same scene of oppression and tyranny ; and to compleat what they had begun, and in a great measure carried on,—even the ruin of any remains of a covenanted-reformation among us. Yea, such of the ministry as are weighted and grieved with the above and the like backslidings and declinings,—have not that courage and resolution to appear in the present judicatories, which the providences and circumstances of the day and time call for.

Hence, notwithstanding of the stop that was put to former violent proceedings by the Assembly 1734 ; yet, instead of carrying on reformation,—a visible fainting and declining seems to take place in the present judicatories of the Church, of which many instances might be given : Such as, their proceeding no further than the sentence of the *lesser excommunication* against one Mr Nimmo, student in

* Psal. xii. 5.

in Divinity; who (in March 1735, in a public discourse in the Divinity hall of *Edinburgh*) made an insolent and blasphemous attack upon the whole of divine revelation;—when no less censure than that of the higher excommunication, summarily pronounced, could have been justly reckoned a sufficient testimony against such bold and daring wickedness; which, in all its circumstances, had never its parallel in this land. Likewise, the Assembly that met foresaid year—appointed a call to be moderate for the presentee to the parish of *Carridden*; exclusive of any other. And the synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*,—upon the remit of the affair made by the same Assembly unto them, concerning the inrolment of the intruder into the parish of *Muckhart*; instead of censuring him for his scandalous intrusion, have taken him into their bosom,—and given him the right hand of fellowship, by inrolling him as one of their number: Though he was never inrolled by the presbytery, who have the more immediate inspection of that parish; and though they reclaimed against the inrolment, and severals of them dissented from that deed of the synod.

And though the Assembly 1736 in their 14th act declare,—“ that it is and has been since the Reformation, “ the principle of this Church; that no Minister shall be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation:” Yet, in contradiction thereunto,—they themselves appointed the presbytery of *Stirling* to proceed to the settlement of a presentee to the parish of *Denny*; though the whole elders, and the body of the people, are dissenting and reclaiming. And likewise, they appointed the synod and presbytery of *Dumfries* to inroll the intruder into the parish of *Troqueir*,—“ as a member of the respective judicatories; to support him in his ministry, and to “ endeavour to bring the the people of that parish to submit to it.” These are sad evidences, that instead of being duly affected with our backsliding and defection,—we *fight and go backward*; yea, we *refuse to return*.

The above-mentioned particulars, are some instances of the gradual declinings and backslidings of this Church and land

land (besides the doctrinal errors already condemned); most of which have taken place betwixt the late *unnatural Rebellion* and this present time: And which this presbytery judge it their duty to testify against. Therefore, and for all the reasons and grounds above *particularly* condescended upon, they did and hereby do *Condemn*, as contrary to the word of God and the covenanted principles of this Church,—all and every one of the steps of defection above narrated: And they did and hereby do *declare*, that they are amongst the causes and grounds of the Lord's righteous quarrel and controversy with this whole Church and land; for which all ranks of persons have reason to humble themselves, before a righteous and holy God.

CHAP. III. *The asserting Part of the Testimony.*

BUT in regard it is necessary for the maintenance and vindication of truth, not only to *condemn* the particular steps of declining and backsliding which a Church and Land may be guilty of; but also to publish, declare and *assert* the truths which are controverted, opposed or assaulted,—whether they concern the doctrine, worship, government, or discipline of the house God: And particularly considering the bold attempts that have been made upon the whole doctrine of this Church, contained in the holy scriptures and her Confession of Faith founded thereupon,—by the foresaid Mr *Simson* and Mr *Campbell*; and by the foresaid print, intitled, *The Assembly's Catechism revised*:—Therefore the Ministers associate in presbytery do judge it a duty necessarily incumbent on them, in the situation wherein adorable providence has placed them as a *judicatory*, and as now *met in presbytery*,—and *constitute* in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone Head of his Church; *judicially* to *acknowledge*, *declare* and *assert*,—

assert,—the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of this Church; in *opposition* to the several steps of defec-
tion and deviation therefrom.

SECTION I. *Concerning doctrine.*

I. **L**IKEAS the *presbytery did*, and *hereby do acknowledge*,
declare and assert,—That the light of nature and
the works of creation and providence, without the aid of
tradition or revelation, shew *that there is a God*; who
hath lordship and sovereignty over all;—as also, that
thereby his wisdom, power and goodness are so far mani-
fested, that all men are left inexcusable: According to the
doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confes-
sion of Faith, [chap. i. § 1. chap. xxi. § 1.]. And they here-
by *reject* and *condemn* all contrary principles and tenets;
that are maintained by Mr *Campbell*, the Socinians, and
others.

II. In like manner they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,
—That the word of God, contained in the scriptures of
the Old and New Testament, is not only a sufficient rule,
or the principal rule,—but that it is the *only* rule to direct
us, how we ought to glorify God and enjoy him;—and that
“the authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought
“to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the
“testimony of any man or church,—but wholly upon God
“ (who is truth itself) the Author thereof; and therefore
“it is to be received, because it is the word of God;”—
And that “the supreme Judge, by which all controversies of
“religion are to be determined,—and all decrees of coun-
“cils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and
“private spirits are to be examined,—and in whose sen-
“tence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy
“Spirit speaking in the scripture:” According to *Confes-
sion*, [chap. i. § 4, 10.]; and the answer to the third ques-
tion in the Larger and the second question in the Shorter
Catechism;—with the scriptures cited. And they hereby
reject and *condemn* all *Deistical*, *Socinian*, and *Popish* er-
rors,—contrary to, or inconsistent herewith.

III, Like-

III. Likewise they hereby acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the Lord Jesus Christ (the eternal Son of God by ineffable, incomprehensible, and necessary generation) is J E H O V A H, the most high God, self-existent and independent: And that he is necessarily existent;—and that the terms, *necessary existence*, *Supreme Deity*, and the title of the *only true God*,—cannot be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father; but belong to the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* equally with the Father: And that the three persons of the adorable Trinity are *numerically* one in substance or essence, equal in power and in glory:—According to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our *Confession*, [chap. ii. § 3.]; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechism,—*How many persons are there in the Godhead?* and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechism,—*How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?* And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles vented by Mr *Simson*; and all other *Arian*, *Socinian* and *Sabellian* tenets,—contrary to the above doctrine, or inconsistent therewith.

IV. Also they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That God has, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably decreed and ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time: And particularly, that he hath predestinated some of mankind unto eternal life, before the foundation of the world was laid,—and according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the council and good pleasure of his own will allenerly;—and that they who are thus predestinated, are chosen unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love; without any foresight of faith, good works,—or perseverance in either of them; or any other thing in them, as conditions or causes moving him thereto: And all to the praise of his glorious grace: According to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, [*Conf.* chap. iii. § 1, 5.]. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles, contained in the *Assemblies Catechism revised*; and all other *Pelagian* and *Arminian* errors, inconsistent herewith.

V. Like-

V. Likewise they acknowledge, declare, and *assert*,—That, when God created man, he entered into a covenant with him; wherein life was promised, upon condition of his perfect and personal obedience;—and that in this covenant (commonly called the covenant of works), the *first Adam* stood in the capacity of a public *covenant-head* and representative unto all his posterity: And that, by reason of his breach of this covenant, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation—sinned in him their head and representative; and fell with him, in his first transgression: And that his sin is truly and justly *imputed* to them every one: And that, upon account of this sin imputed,—all infants descending from *Adam* by ordinary generation, want that original righteousness wherewith *Adam* was created; and are by nature children of wrath:—According to *Conf.* [chap. vi. § 3, 4, 6. chap. vii. § 2.]; and *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 20, 22, 25, 27.], *Short. Cat.* [*quest.* 12, 16.];—and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary tenets maintained by Mr *Simson*, and the Reviser of the Assemblies Catechism; and all other principles contrary to, or inconsistent herewith.

VI. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That man, by his fall into a state of sin, is wholly dead in trespasses and sins; and hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: And that man, in a natural state, being enmity against God and averse from all spiritual good,—is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or prepare himself thereto; and consequently, that there is no necessary nor certain *connexion*, either in the nature of things or by any divine promise,—between the morally *serious endeavours* of man in a natural state, and the obtaining special or saving grace:—According to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, *Conf.* [chap. ix. § 3. chap. x. § 2, 3.]. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all opposite principles maintained by Mr *Simson*; and all *Arminian* errors inconsistent herewith. Notwithstanding they *assert*, That it is the duty of all, and every one, to give diligent attendance upon the ordinances of divine institution and appointment; particularly the reading and hearing of the word, and prayer: These
being

being the ordinary means by which converting and quickening grace is communicated, to such as are dead in trespasses and sins;—according to Larg. Cat. [*quest.* 153, 155.]; and Short. Cat. [*quest.* 85, and 88.]

VII. Also they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the *light of nature* is not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary to salvation: And therefore they who do not profess the Christian religion cannot be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess:—According to *Conf.* [chap. i. § 1. chap. x. § 4.]; Larg. Cat. [*quest.* 60]. And they *condemn* all *Socinian* or other tenets inconsistent therewith, in the foresaid Catechism revised: And particularly Mr *Simson's* erroneous doctrine, concerning an obscure revelation and offer of grace made to all without the Church; and Mr *Campbell's* erroneous opinion;—that the laws of nature are in themselves a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness; and that our observing of these laws, is the great mean and instrument of our real and lasting felicity.

VIII. Further, they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the second Person of the adorable Trinity did, in the fulness of time, assume the human nature into a personal union with his divine; that he took to him a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*,—and born of her, yet without sin; and that he is *very God* and *very man*, in two distinct natures and one person for ever:—according to *Conf.* [chap. viii. § 2.], and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all *Nestorian* and *Sabellian* principles and tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith; whether vented in the foresaid Catechism revised, or other erroneous treatises of that kind.

IX. Further, they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the eternal Son of God, who was made *manifest in the flesh*, did, in our nature, as the *second Adam*, the public head and representative of elect sinners, and the undertaking Surety for them,—yield a perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works, in the room and stead of e-
lect

lect sinners; and that in their room and stead alone,—he bore the whole of that punishment threatened in the law, and incurred by the breach of it: And that, in his sufferings unto death, he substituted himself in the room of sinners,—and endured that curse, bore that wrath, and died that death which is the wages and just desert of every sin, and which the sinner himself should have undergone: And that the sufferings of the Son of God in our nature were a true, proper and expiatory sacrifice; and a proper, real, and complete satisfaction unto the justice of God for sin:—According to *Conf.* [chap. viii. § 1, 4, 5. chap. xi § 3.]; *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 71.];—and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all opposite principles held forth in the foresaid Catechism; and all other *Arminian* and *Baxterian* tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith.

X. Also they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the obedience of Christ in his life, and his sufferings unto death, (commonly called his *active* and *passive* obedience),—is that perfect and complete righteousness, on the account of which alone a sinner is justified in the sight of God; and that it is upon the account of this righteousness imputed, that sin is pardoned,—and that the persons of any are accepted as righteous in the sight of God; and that this righteousness imputed, is the only foundation and ground of a sinner's right and title unto eternal life: And although the grace of faith be the instrument, whereby we receive and apply Christ and his righteousness; yet neither faith, gospel-repentance, nor our sincere obedience, either all of them together or any of them separately,—are our justifying righteousness in the sight of God, or the ground of our acceptance, or of our right and title unto eternal life:—According to *Conf.* [chap. xi. § 1.], *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 73.]; and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all opposite principles contained in the foresaid Catechism; and all other *Popish*, *Arminian* or *Baxterian* tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith.

XI. Also they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That any want of conformity to the righteous and holy law of God is a sin, as well as all actual and voluntary transgressions of the law, [*Conf.* chap. vi. § 4. 6. *Larg. Cat.* *quest.* 24.]

Short. Cat. *quest.* 14.]: And that every sin doth, in its own nature, deserve the wrath and curse of God,—both in this life and that which is to come; according to *Conf.* [Chap. xv. § 4.] and *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 152.]: And consequently, that the original corruption and depravation of our nature is a damnable sin, [*Conf.* chap. vi. § 6.); and that sinning and suffering will be the misery of the damned in hell through eternity. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles contained either in the foresaid Catechism Revised, or maintained and defended by Mr *Simson*; and all other contrary *Pelagian* and *Arminian* tenets whatsoever.

XII. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the supreme and only standard, measure and rule of all virtuous and religious actions,—is the righteous and holy will and law of God; and not our own self-interest and pleasure: According to the doctrine held forth from the word, *Conf.* [chap. i. § 2.]; *Larg. Cat.* [*quest.* 3.] *Short. Cat.* [*quest.* 2.]. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles and tenets, maintained by Mr *Campbell*, and others.

XIII. Also they hereby acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That although all that believe in Jesus are delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet they are under perpetual and indissoluble obligations, to conform themselves to the moral law as a rule of their obedience: Not only because of blessings and benefits which they have received,—but from the authority of God as he is JEHOVAH, the great Lawgiver; whose perfections are infinitely glorious and excellent, and whose dominion is over all:—According to *Conf.* (chap. xix. § 5, 6.). And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles held forth in the foresaid Catechism; and all other *Antinomian* principles and tenets inconsistent herewith.

XIV. Further, they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That God hath all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself,—and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient; not standing in need of creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them,—but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: And that he hath most sovereign dominion over them; to do by them

them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth: And that any rewards that he has promised to any of his creatures, are free and voluntary; and that, in all their obedience, worship, and service,—they can neither profit him, nor be any way advantageous unto him:—According to the doctrine held forth from the word of God, *Conf.* [chap. ii. § 2. chap. vii. § 1.]. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary principles and tenets, maintained by Mr *Campbell* and others.

XV. In like manner, they hereby acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the principal and leading motive and spring of true love to God, or of acceptable obedience and service unto him, is not our own self-interest or our own happiness and felicity,—though the same is by divine condescension inseparably connected therewith; but that the leading motive of all true love to God, is the supereminent and glorious perfections and excellencies of his nature,—as they shine forth and are manifested in the person of him who is I M M A N U E L, God with us; and that all who truly love God, do love him chiefly for himself: As also, that all acceptable obedience and service unto him—is primarily and chiefly influenced from a regard unto the authority of God in Christ, expressed in his holy law; and proceeds from a principle of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And that the principal and chief end of all such obedience is, that God may be honoured and glorified in our bodies and spirits which are his: And consequently, all that obedience and service to God that is principally influenced, and primarily springs from one's self-interest, advantage or applause, or from fear of punishment or the hope of a reward,—is legal, mercenary and servile; and moves in no higher sphere than what men in a natural state may attain unto:—According to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, *Conf.* [chap. xvi. § 2, 7.]; *Larg. and Short. Cat.* [*quest.* 1.]. And they hereby reject and *condemn* all contrary errors maintained by Mr *Simson* and Mr *Campbell*, as having a direct tendency to make all our acts of obedience and worship servile and mercenary; and so to destroy and overturn the specific difference that is between common and saving grace.—or between the obedience of the temporary, and the obedience of the sound believer; and to establish only a gradual

dual difference between common grace in the one and saving grace in the other,—which is the gross error of Mr *Baxter*, and of the *Arminians*, and others.

XVI. In like manner, they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That all such as have saving faith, believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God : And that the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, in the days of his humiliation, did acknowledge, believe in and worship their Lord and Master as the true promised Messiah, the Son of the living God, the only begotten of the Father ; and expected from him spiritual and eternal life and salvation : And that all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, can neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace : And that the faith of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord did not fail, in the interval of time between his death and resurrection ; and therefore whatever clouds and doubts they were under,—they were never so far left as to conclude, that their Lord and Master was a downright deceiver and impostor :—According to *Conf.* [chap. viii. § 1. chap. xiv. § 2. chap. xvii. § 1, 3.] ; *Larg. Cat.* [quest. 72. *Short. Cat. quest.* 86.)] ;—and scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles and tenets maintained by Mr *Campbell*, or contained in the foresaid *Catechism Revised* ; and all other principles and tenets inconsistent herewith.

SECTION II. Concerning Worship, Government and Discipline.

THE PRESBYTERY likewise taking to their serious consideration,—That the Testimony of the Church of Christ in this land has, ever since our reformation from Popery, been stated in a special manner for the *prerogative Royal* of the *Prince of the Kings of the earth*,—as King, Head, and Lord over his own house ; and for the government, worship, and discipline which he has appointed and instituted in the same ;—though, in this perilous time wherein their lot is cast, the doctrine is also undermined and subverted ; which (as has been observed) was not the trial of this Church in former periods : Therefore they judge it their duty to bear testimony for the *sovereignty*

verignty and *headship* of the Lord Jesus over his own house; and to declare their adherence to the contendings, wrestlings and testimonies of this Church and her several members, both Ministers and Professors,—for the same.

I. Likeas the Ministers associate for the exercise of church government and discipline in a presbyterial capacity, being now *met in presbytery*, did and hereby do acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That the Lord Jesus Christ, our great I M M A N U E L, and he *alone*, is King over Zion the hill of his holiness: And that he is the only Head, Lord, and Lawgiver, over his own house; and that to him alone it appertains to give officers, laws and ordinances to the Church,—which is his spiritual, free, and independent kingdom;—and that the office-bearers in the house of God, and all their several spiritual and ecclesiastical functions and administrations,—as also all the courts and judicatories appointed by the Lord Jesus in the Church, his spiritual kingdom; are subordinate *to him alone*, in their ecclesiastical administrations;—and that the office-bearers of the Church have power, warrant and authority from the Lord Jesus,—to hold General Assemblies, as well as other subordinate ecclesiastical judicatories, for the exercise of church-government and discipline,—either at stated times, or occasionally, as the circumstances or necessity of the Church requires; and to dissolve themselves, and to appoint the time of their next meeting: According to the word of God *; and the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church, (particularly *act*, sess. 26. Assembly 1638; and *act* Assembly 1647, approving the Confession of Faith, sess. 23.):—It being always free to the civil magistrate to call Synods and Assemblies of Ministers and Elders, for consulting and advising with them in matters of religion, upon any necessary occasion,—according to the foresaid acts. And they hereby reject and *condemn* the following *Erastian* principles and tenets:

1. That the civil magistrate is supreme over all persons, and in all causes,—ecclesiastical as well as civil.
2. That the office-bearers of the Church, in their spiritual and ecclesiastical functions and administrations, are subordinate unto the civil magistrate.

3. That

* Psal. ii. throughout, Isa. ix. 6, 7. Math. xvi. 19. ch. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. Eph. i. 20,—23.

3. That the external government of the Church is precarious, or depends upon the will and pleasure of the civil magistrate.

4. That the ordering and disposing of the external government and policy of the Church, doth properly belong to the civil magistrate,—by virtue of his prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastic: And that the civil magistrate may emit such constitutions, acts and orders, concerning the administration of the external government of the Church, and concerning all ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein,—as he in his wisdom shall think fit; as was enacted by Parliament*, and practised in the late persecuting times. All which, and the like principles and tenets, have a direct tendency to confound the ecclesiastic and civil jurisdictions: And have been witnessed against by the faithful ministers and members of this Church, as dishonouring to the Son of God; and divesting him of his prerogative royal as King over the Church,—his own free, spiritual, and independent kingdom.

II. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the Lord Jesus, the alone King and Head of his Church, hath appointed a *particular form of government* to take place therein,—distinct from the civil government, and not subordinate to the civil magistrate; which form of government is to continue to the end of the world, unalterable: And that *presbyterial* church-government, without any superiority of office above a teaching presbyter,—in the due subordination † of kirk-sessions to presbyteries, of presbyteries to provincial synods, and of provincial synods to general Assemblies,—is that only form of government laid down and appointed by the Lord Christ in his word;—which form of government has been received and owned by this Church, as the only government of divine institution and appointment; as is evident from her public acts and constitutions, particularly from the second book of discipline,—and the propositions concerning church-government (with the scripture proofs and arguments annexed), as the said propositions were received and approved by

* Act 1. Parl. 2. Cha. II.

† The Presbytery, in their *Formula*, which was framed soon afterwards, did insert these explicatory words, viz. [of judicatories, such as]

by the Assembly 1645, sess. 16. And they hereby reject and condemn the following principles and tenets; whether *Erastian, Prelatic, or Sectarian*:

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ hath not appointed in his word, any particular form of government in his Church under the New Testament; a principle highly reflecting upon the head of the Church,—as if he had not been as faithful in his own house as a Son, as *Moses* was as a servant.

2. That the *Diocesan Bishop*, or Prelate, is an officer superior to a teaching presbyter; which principle stands condemned by several acts and constitutions of this Church,—as contrary to the word of God, as a gross usurpation in the House of God, and which brought forth ANTI-CHRIST that man of sin.

3. That a particular congregational Church is not subordinate nor accountable unto any superior judicatory: Which principle and tenet is also condemned by the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church, as contrary to the word of God; and as having a native and direct tendency to introduce a licentious laxness in principle, and an universal discord in practice, in the House of God,

III. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That unto the office-bearers of the Church, and to them alone, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* are committed: Particularly the key of *doctrine*,—for expounding and preaching the word, and determining controversies of faith according to the scriptures;—the key of *government and discipline*, for preserving the beauty and purity of the Church,—and for inflicting of church-censures upon the erroneous, the scandalous and obstinate; that she may be preserved or purged from such errors in principle, or such scandals in practice, whereby she may be in danger of being corrupted;—as also the key of *ordination and mission*, for the ordaining and sending forth of Church-officers for spiritual service and ministration in the House of God:—According to [Mat. xvi. 19. John xx. 23. Mat. xviii. 18. Acts xv. Acts xvi. 4. Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 2.]; the Books of Discipline, propositions concerning church-government and ordination of Ministers, and other laudable acts and constitutions of this Church.

And concerning that power and authority which belongs to the office-bearers of the Church in their judicative capacity,

capacity, they further declare and *assert*,—That the same is only a *stewardly* and *ministerial* authority; subordinate unto the authority and laws of the Head of the Church, declared and published in his own word. And, to express it in the words of our Confession (chap. xxxi. § 3.),—
 “ It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience;
 “ to set down rules and directions, for better ordering of
 “ the public worship of God and government of his Church;
 “ to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration,
 “ and authoritatively to determine the same: Which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of
 “ God, are to be received with reverence and submission;
 “ not only for their agreement with the word,—but also
 “ for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his word.”

And they hereby reject and *condemn* the following *Securian* principles;—That the keys of government and discipline are given, by the Head of the Church, to the whole community of the faithful; and that ecclesiastical Synods and councils have only a mere consultative power and authority: Which principles they condemn, as contrary to the word of God,—the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church founded thereupon; and as having a native tendency to introduce anarchy and confusion into the house of God.

IV. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and *assert*,—That ministers and other office-bearers in the Church ought to be set over congregations, by the call and consent of the *majority* of such in these congregations who are admitted to *full communion* with the Church in all her sealing ordinances; and that there should be no preference of voices in this matter, upon the account of any secular consideration: According to [Acts i. 16. to the close of the chapter, Acts vi. 2—6. chap. xiv. 23. John x. 4, 5. 1 John iv. 1. James ii. 1, —6.], with many other scriptures; and according to our books of discipline and acts of Assembly, agreeable thereto. And they reject and *condemn* all contrary principles, tenets and practices,—whereby the scripture-rule and pattern, in this important matter, is denied and rejected; and ministers are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming congregations,

V. In like manner, they do hereby own and *assert*,—The *perpetual obligation* of the *National Covenant* of *Scotland*, frequently subscribed by persons of all ranks in this kingdom; and particularly as approven of and explained by the General Assembly 1638,—and sworn by all ranks of persons *Anno* 1639, and ratified by act of parliament 1640. As also, they own and assert the perpetual obligation of the *Solemn League and Covenant* for maintaining and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms; taken and subscribed by all ranks in *Scotland* and *England*, *Anno* 1643,—ratified by act of parliament of *Scotland*, *Anno* 1644: And particularly as renewed in *Scotland*, with an acknowledgement of sins and engagement to duties, by all ranks, *Anno* 1648. Concerning which oaths and covenants, they declare and assert,—That, as to the matter of them, they were lawful, being plainly contained in the word of God; and as to their ends, they were laudable and necessary: And therefore they did and hereby do declare their adherence to the same.

VI. Likewise they hereby receive, acknowledge and *approve*—all the several pieces of reformation attained unto by this Church in her several reforming periods; particularly the *Confession of Faith*, compiled by the Assembly of divines who met at *Westminster*, with Commissioners from the Church of *Scotland*;—which Confession they receive and own as the Confession of their Faith; as the same was received and approven by act of Assembly 1647, Sess. 23. As also they receive and own the whole doctrine contained in the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, compiled by the foresaid Assembly at *Westminster*; and approven by acts of Assembly 1648, sessions 10 and 19,—as a part of uniformity in catechising, for the three kingdoms; and ratified by act of Parliament, February 7th 1649. As also, the *Form of Church-government and ordination of Ministers*; as the same was received and approven by act of Assembly 1645, Sess. 16;—and the *Directory for public worship*, as the same stands approven by act of Assembly 1645, Sess. 10: Together with all the acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1650, and since that time*; in as far as they were passed for advancing

VOL. I.

U

and

* As this general reception is not *absolute*,—with regard to *Acts of Assembly* from 1638 to 1650, or to *Acts of Assembly since that time*; but wholly under the general *restriction* here added: So it takes in all *Acts*

and carrying on a covenanted reformation,—agreeable to the word of God, and the received principles and constitutions of this Church.

VII. Likewise they hereby declare their *adherence* to the several *Testimonies*, *Declarations* and *Warnings*,—emitted in behalf of the covenanted reformation of this Church, from the year 1650 to the year 1688: Particularly to the contendings and wrestlings during that period, whereby a great cloud of witnesses resisted even unto blood; in testifying for the supremacy and headship of the Lord Jesus over his own House, and other branches of our covenanted reformation,—in opposition to *abjured Prelacy*, and that blasphemous supremacy usurped by the civil powers over the House of God under the foresaid period †. And they hereby *condemn* all ecclesiastical censures whatsoever, passed or inflicted upon any, whether Ministers, elders or others,—from the year 1650 to this time; for their adherence unto, or witnessing for, any branch of our covenanted reformation †.

VIII. Also they hereby declare their *adherence* to the several *Testimonies*, whether given in by representations and petitions to the several General Assemblies, or otherwise emitted and published since the year 1688,—against the several sinful omissions of the judicatories of this Church above mentioned; or the several steps of declining and backsliding in this present age, from a covenanted Reformation

Acts of Assembly, from the period mentioned down to the time of stating the secession,—as far as they can agree with that restriction.

† This general *adherence* cannot be justly constructed of, as if it meant an adopting or approving of every thing, either as to matter or manner,—in all these *testimonies*, *declarations*, *warnings*, *contendings* and *wrestlings*: It can only mean an adherence to all these, so far as *in behalf of the covenanted Reformation of this Church*; and so far as belongs to the *testifying* here mentioned.

† Betwixt the years 1650 and 1660, there were censures passed by the *public Resolutions* against the *Protesters*,—for their testifying against the public resolutions; all which censures are here condemned. And after the Revolution, long before the stating of the secession,—several Ministers and others (who were testifying against public evils, particularly in the religious settlement at the Revolution) had censures passed against them, under the character of *separatists from the Church*: All which censures are here likewise condemned,—so far as passed against them *for their adherence unto, or witnessing for any branch of our covenanted Reformation*; yet without approving all their *manner* of testifying,—and without adopting all the principles that any of them thought proper to espouse for *matter of Testimony*.

mation once attained unto*:—And particularly, to the several *Representations* offered by the Ministers of this presbytery to the commission of the General Assembly that met at *Edinburgh* August 1733†: And to the paper that was afterwards emitted by them, intituled, [A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of *Scotland*]: As also, to the *Reasons* published by them, why they have not acceded to the judicatories of the established Church.

CONCLUSION.

Thus this PRESBYTERY have endeavoured to discharge themselves, of what they apprehend to be their duty in their present situation. And their design in the whole is, to *bear Testimony* to the truths of God,—opposed or assaulted in the present age; and against the defections and backslidings, whether in the present or former times;—for the glory of God, and the honour of his truth; and (if the Lord may be graciously pleased to bless this mean) to excite the *present generation* to *search and try their ways*,—and to *turn again to the Lord*, from whom we have every one deeply revolted: As also to bear testimony to *Scotland's* covenanted reformation, for the sake of the *generations to come*; that they may consider the palaces of *Zion*, and mark her bulwarks, and may know what the Lord has done for *Scotland*;—that they may set their hope in God; and may neither forget his works, nor be as their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation,—that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. And

* This general *adherence* to the Testimonies given in, or emitted and published, since the year 1688,—is not *absolute*; but wholly under the general *restriction* here added,—owning these Testimonies no further than as *against the sinful omissions of the judicatories of this Church above-mentioned, or the several steps of declining and backsliding in this present age from a covenanted Reformation once attained unto.*

The amount of the whole is, that by the general clauses of this and the preceding paragraph,—the *Associate Presbytery* served themselves *Heirs* to all the *witnessing-work* in behalf of our covenanted Reformation, ever since the decline thereof in the year 1650; adopting all former Testimonies in behalf thereof, so far as agreeing with this present *Judicial Testimony*: Without approving the manner of testifying, in a way of secession from the Revolution Church,—sooner than that manner of it came to be shut up unto, by the procedure of the Commission in *November 1733*;

† The adherence here declared to these *Representations*, certainly means an approving of them,—as a *proper manner* of testifying *then*, in a way of communion with the Established Church; But cannot mean an adherence to the *same manner* of testifying *now*, when a secession was necessarily stated.

And they *obtest* and entreat all ranks of persons whatsoever, into whose hands this their [*Act, Declaration and Testimony*] may come,—that laying aside all carnal and politic intendments, every thing may be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary: And that, in the fear of that great and dreadful name The LORD *our God*, they may consider both their own and the iniquities of our fathers; and may return unto the Lord, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—and a particular acknowledgment of sin, and unfeigned and thorough reformation: And, in returning to the Lord, we may hope and expect,—that he that hath torn us will heal us, and that he that hath smitten will bind us up. But, if we go on obstinately in our trespasses, we have just ground to fear,—that as we are at present pining away in our sins, and consumed under our manifold spiritual strokes and judgments; so a righteous and holy God may be provoked to come out of his place, and punish the inhabitants of this land for their iniquities: And that he may send a sword, or some desolating calamity and judgment,—to *avenge the quarrel of his covenant*.

May the LORD himself return: May he *look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine; the vineyard which his own right-hand hath planted, the branch which he hath made strong for himself. It is burnt with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of his countenance.* May his hand be upon the man of his right-hand, upon the Son of man whom he hath made strong for himself; so shall we not go back from him: May he quicken us, and we will call upon his name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Extracted by JA. FISHER, *Cls. Pres.*

[The following Note was omitted at the foot of page 144,—about the *penal statutes against Witches, viz.*]

The Associate Presbytery is not to be considered, as having ever interested themselves in the affair of these *penal statutes*,—by way of particular approbation, as to the terms in which any of them were laid; or as to what method of process was prescribed by them, or ever practised in consequence of them: Nor is it to be supposed, that the Presbytery would have taken any particular *alteration* of these statutes—for a subject of their consideration. What they saw cause to testify against, as among the public sins of the nation, is,—an *absolute repealing* of these statutes; “That there shall be no prosecution against any person for “witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration.”

S T E P II.

The DECLINATURE.

IN February 1737, before the publishing of the *Judicial Testimony*,—Mr *Ralph Erskine* Minister at *Dunfermline* and Mr *Thomas Mair* Minister at *Orwel*—gave in Declarations of secession to their Presbytery, and acceded to the *Associate Presbytery*; which Declarations were published along with that Testimony. And in September following, Mr *Thomas Nairn* Minister at *Abbotshall* gave in a Declaration of secession to his Presbytery; as did Mr *James Thomson* Minister at *Burntisland*, in June next year: whereupon they likewise acceded to the *Associate Presbytery*, at the first opportunities after their secessions.

In pursuance of an act of the Assembly 1738, their commission drew up and executed a libel against the eight Ministers of the *Associate Presbytery*,—in order to their compearing upon it before the Assembly 1739: By which libel their secession, their judicial Testimony, and several steps which they had accordingly taken for the relief of the Lord's oppressed heritage,—were charged upon them, under the notion of crimes and offences. Wherefore these brethren did “reckon themselves especially called” at this time, to declare themselves more fully and plainly, with respect to the present judicatories, than they “had hitherto done.” Accordingly, when they were called to the bar of the Assembly, on the 17th day of May,—they went in as a *constitute Presbtery*: And after the libel was read, Mr *Thomas Mair*, as their Moderator, read and gave in their *Declinature*; which they had passed into an act the day before: And when each of them had declared their adherence to it, they withdrew.

This *Declinature* was intituled [ACT of the *Associate Presbytery*; finding and declaring, that the present judicatories of this Church are not lawful nor right constitute courts of CHRIST: And declining all authority, power and jurisdiction that the said judicatories may claim to themselves over the said Presbytery, or any of the members thereof,—or over any that are under their inspection; and particularly declining the authority of a General Assembly

bly now met in *Edinburgh*, the tenth day of *May*, One thousand seven hundred and thirty-nine years.] And it may suffice, in this place, to give the the following *abstract* of the *grounds* of the said Declinature; containing an addition to the former state of the Secession-Testimony.

I. The present judicatories of this National Church not only receive into their number, but refuse to purge out from among them, and continue to support intruders,—and many who are notourly known to be guilty of such scandalous practices, as make them obnoxious to the censures of the Church; and who therefore have no warrant from the Lord and Head of the Church, to sit in his courts.

In all corners of the land, men are intruded into the pastoral office, and imposed upon the flock and heritage of God: Who therefore have no authority or warrant from Christ (the great Shepherd of the sheep) to feed the flock, but are rather grievous wolves,—who have entered in to the tearing, renting, wounding and scattering the flock of Christ; and consequently have no warrant from the King of Zion, to sit in the courts of his Kingdom. Yet the said judicatories support and encourage such, and refuse to purge them out from among them: And courts who receive and sustain such men as constituent members, notwithstanding of remonstrances and other means used by such as were aggrieved, to have them purged out, are not right constitute courts of Christ; wherefore his subjects have his warrant, to refuse and decline their authority and jurisdiction.

Likewise the present judicatories of this Church are constitute of a great many members who have given ground of offence to the Church and people of God, by their scandalous practices; in promoting and carrying on a course of defection from our received and covenanted principles: Many such members as are not only silent in the public cause of God, but dissemblers of public sins; who scatter and drive away the flock of Christ, and rule them with force and cruelty; and who have been active, either in screening the erroneous from a just and adequate censure, or in dismissing them without any censure at all. For all which practices, they ought to be deposed from the holy ministry,—according to the word of God, and the laudable

able acts and constitutions of this Church: And this Presbytery cannot hold the said judicatories, who are constitute of such members, as lawful and right constitute courts of Christ.

II. If the conduct of the judicatories of this national Church, for many years by-past, is duly considered;—how they have been active in carrying on a course of defection and backsliding from the Lord,—by tolerating the erroneous, by supporting and countenancing error; by enacting laws and constitutions contrary to the laws of the King of Zion,—whereby ministerial freedom is suppressed, and new and unwarrantable terms of ministerial and Christian communion are imposed,—and whereby the heritage of God is oppressed and broken: They cannot be held and repute as free and lawful courts of Christ.

The present judicatories are tolerating the erroneous, and supporting and countenancing error; as will appear from their conduct, both towards Mr *Simson* and Mr *Campbell*: And is made evident in the Judicial Act and Testimony published by this Presbytery, to which they refer. As also the last General Assembly, when several gross propositions were brought to their bar, which had been excerpted by the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* out of two sermons that Dr *Wisbart* had preached; yet that Assembly refused to examine, whether the said propositions were contrary to our Confession of Faith or not: But, instead of this, they acquit the Doctor; upon a declaration that he made before them,—of his adherence unto the several articles of our Confession of Faith, to which it was alledged the said propositions were contrary.

Likewise arbitrary laws and constitutions have been enacted, whereby ministerial freedom is suppressed; and new and unwarrantable terms of ministerial and Christian communion are imposed. Such was the act of Assembly 1733, concerning the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*; as also, the act and sentence passed against the protesting Brethren by the said Assembly.—And the present judicatories of this Church are so far from returning to their duty,—that the violence done to the heritage of God, through all the corners of the land, is still carried on; as is evident from their conduct these several years by-past:
And

And that in opposition to instructions from many presbyteries and synods;—as also, notwithstanding of representations and petitions given in to several General Assemblies, from provincial synods,—and from a considerable number of Ministers, Elders and Christians through the land; the contempt cast upon which was an evidence, that they hated to be reformed.

And since the judicatories of this Church, instead of acknowledging and mourning over the above and like defections and backslidings, justify the steps they have taken; yea libel and cite the several Ministers of this Presbytery to their bar for censure,—for no other reason, if their libel is duly considered, but because the said Ministers endeavour to testify that their above-mentioned deeds are evil;—and all this, notwithstanding that the ordinary means have been used to reclaim them: Therefore this Presbytery judge that they are well warranted, from the Law and Testimony, to declare,—that they are not lawful nor right constitute Courts of Christ; and to decline them accordingly.

III. The present judicatories of this Church have subordinated themselves unto the civil powers,—in their ecclesiastical meetings, functions and administrations: And therefore this Presbytery cannot own them as free and lawful Courts of Christ.

The late act of Parliament concerning Captain *John Porteous*, appointed to be read from the pulpits of *Scotland* the first Lord's day of every month for the space of a year,—is become a sad snare, both to Ministers and judicatories *. The most part of the Ministers of *Scotland* have read

* This *John Porteous*, a Captain in the Town-guard of *Edinburgh*, having fired and caused his men also to fire among the multitude, upon some provocation which he got when guarding the scaffold at an execution,—whereby a considerable number of persons were killed and wounded; he was condemned to suffer death, for the murders thus committed by him. But he obtained a reprieve, which it was supposed would be perpetual. Hereupon a great body of people, on the evening of the 7th of *September 1736*, having taken effectual measures to prevent opposition,—broke into the prison, carried him out; and gave him a public execution in the *Grass-Market*.

At the ensuing session of Parliament, the act here referred to was passed: By which all persons charged with being accessory to the murder of Captain

read this act, in one shape and another : And they have thereby subjected themselves, in the exercise of their spiritual function, to the civil powers; in regard they have, in obedience to their authority, delivered the doctrines and commandments of men, instead of the lively oracles of God, —to the Church assembled together for the public worship and service of God : Whereby the sabbath of the Lord has been prophaned, a wicked generation have been hardened, the sacred office of the Ministry has been exposed, and the Lord's people stumbled and wounded.

Likewise, by their obedience to the foresaid act, they have directly consented to the Parliament's taking the key of discipline into their own hands : In regard that, by one of the penalties annexed to the said act, it is declared, — That such as do not read the same, shall be incapable of sitting and voting in any ecclesiastical Court ; whereby the Parliament take upon them to suspend Ministers of the Gospel from the exercise of a considerable part and branch of their ministerial work. As this is a great encroachment upon the kingdom of Christ,—and a sinful usurpation of his authority, who is the alone Supreme Head, Lord and Lawgiver to the Church, his own spiritual kingdom ; so the readers of this act have, in so far, openly and expressly given up with his alone headship and supremacy over the same.

And though all the judicatories of this Church, supreme and subordinate, have met since the passing and reading

VOL. I.

X

of

Captain *Porteous*, were commanded on pain of death to surrender themselves for trial within a limited time; all persons concealing or succouring them after that time, were adjudged to incur the pains of death; and persons were encouraged to become evidences against their accomplices, by a promise of pardon,—and of a great reward. [Yet no discovery was ever made !]

And this act every Minister of the Church of *Scotland* was appointed to read from the pulpit, in the time of divine worship, on the first Lord's day of every month for one whole year ; under heavy *ecclesiastical* penalties, viz. " In case such Minister shall neglect to read this act as is hereby directed, he shall for the first offence be declared incapable of sitting or voting in any church-judicatory ; and, for the second offence, be declared incapable of taking, holding or enjoying any ecclesiastical benefice in *Scotland* : " Which *ecclesiastical* penalties were appointed to be executed by the Court of Session, or any Court of Justiciary ; upon a summary complaint, at the instance of his Majesty's Advocate :

of the said act; yet the readers of it are not censured: Neither is there any Judicial Testimony emitted by the said judicatories, against the dishonour that is done to the King of Zion, and the encroachment that is made on his spiritual kingdom,—by this late act of Parliament. And in regard that it is so, this Presbytery cannot but look upon the whole body of this national Church to be involved in the sin; and that the judicatories thereof do now practically declare,—That they hold their meetings in subordination to the civil powers, and not to the King of Zion alone; and that they have virtually and materially given up with the alone headship and supremacy of the Lord Jesus over the Church, his purchased kingdom: So that they cannot own the present judicatories, as free and lawful Courts of the King of Zion*.

“ Therefore,

* The seceding Brethren published, along with their *Declinature*, a copy of the *Libel*,—and Remarks upon it; as also upon the act of Assembly concerning them, after their Declinature was given in.—By this act, the Assembly found the libel *relevant* to infer deposition; and also found the same proven, in its most material articles,—by the Presbytery's Act and Declinature read in their presence.

More particularly, they found by this Act,—that these brethren had taken upon them, in their Declinature, to speak in most injurious, disrespectful and insolent terms, concerning the highest civil authority; which could only respect the Testimony given by them, against the late act of Parliament concerning *Porteous*.—“ But (say they) the seceding Ministers must here observe with regret, that the present judicatories are, by their procedure, involving themselves more and more in deep defection from the Lord. For it is plain, that when the Assembly have condemned, in the above manner, the Testimony that was given in their presence,—against the above encroachment on the Kingdom of Christ, and the sinful compliance of the Ministry of this Church therewith; they have thereby condemned a Testimony against the foresaid encroachment and compliance,—as a speaking in most injurious, disrespectful and insolent terms, of the highest civil authority. And in like manner, when the seceding Ministers are declared to deserve the highest censures of this Church, and particularly deposition, on account of their Testimony against the sinfulness of the foresaid act of Parliament; it is also plain, that a silent submission unto the above encroachment upon the Kingdom of Christ, without any suitable Testimony against the same,—is made a term of ministerial communion, by the present judicatories. For, according to the above words of their act of Assembly, if any shall say that the act of Parliament agent Captain *John Porteous* contained a sinful and Erastian encroachment upon the Kingdom of Christ,—they speak in most injurious, insolent and disrespectful terms of the highest civil authority; and deserve the highest censures of the Church, particularly that of deposition.”

“ Therefore, and for all the above reasons, *this Pres-*
“ *bytery* judge it their duty to declare, likeas hereby they
“ *find and declare*,—That the present judicatories of this
“ national Church *are not lawful nor right constitute Courts*
“ *of CHRIST*; And therefore they did and hereby do
“ *decline* all authority, power and jurisdiction, which any
“ of the said judicatories may claim to themselves over
“ this Presbytery,—or any of the members thereof, as to
“ their ministerial office, conduct or character; or over
“ any who have subjected themselves to their presbyterial
“ oversight or inspection. And particularly, for the
“ grounds and reasons above-mentioned, they did and
“ hereby do *decline* any power, authority or jurisdiction
“ that this General Assembly now met at *Edinburgh* may
“ assume to themselves,—of proceeding in a way of cen-
“ sure against all or any of the members of this Presbytery;
“ for their secession from the present judicatories, their
“ presbyterial association, or the matters contained in the
“ Judicial Act and Testimony emitted by them,—or any
“ other matters whatsoever, relative to the said Secession
“ and the said Testimony: And that in regard the present
“ judicatories cannot be competent judges, in a Testimony
“ for the reformed and covenanted principles of the
“ Church of *Scotland*,—from which they have so deeply
“ swerved, by so many lamentable steps of defection from
“ the same. And further, for the above grounds and
“ reasons, this Presbytery did and hereby do declare,—
“ That any act, sentence or deed that may be done or
“ passed against all or any one of them, by any of the
“ present judicatories,—whereby their ministerial office or
“ the exercise thereof, or their pastoral relation to their
“ respective congregations, may be affected or prejudged,
“ —shall be held and reputed as *null and void in itself*:
“ And that it shall be lawful and warrantable for them,
“ notwithstanding of any such act, sentence or deed,—
“ to exercise their ministry, in as full and ample a manner
“ as hitherto they have done; as if no such act, sentence
“ or deed, had been done or passed against them. In
“ like manner, they did and hereby do declare,—That
“ notwithstanding of any act, sentence or deed, done or
“ passed to the prejudice of their pastoral relation to their
“ several

“several congregations ; the people of their respective
 “congregations shall be held, bound and obliged, (ac-
 “cording to the solemn engagements they came under,
 “when the several brethren of the Presbytery were or-
 “dained to the holy Ministry among them) still to own
 “and acknowledge them as their *lawful* and *sent pastors* :
 “As also, that they shall be bound and obliged to hold
 “and account any, whether Ministers or Probationers,
 “who (in consequence of any act, sentence or deed, done
 “or passed against any of the members of this Presby-
 “tery) shall exercise any part of the ministerial work in
 “their respective congregations,—as *intruders* upon their
 “ministerial work and labours :—And that in regard the
 “members of this Presbytery have been and are endea-
 “vouring, through the strength, conduct and leading of
 “divine grace,—to display and prosecute the ends of a
 “Judicial Testimony for the Doctrine, Worship, Discip-
 “line and Government of the Church of *Scotland* ; and
 “against several steps of defection from the same, both in
 “former and present times ;—to which Testimony both
 “Ministers and People of all ranks in this covenanted
 “land are, by the solemn oath of God, bound to ad-
 “here *.”

This *Act* was concluded with an earnest call to the judi-
 catories of the Church, to return unto the Lord,—in a
 proper course of reformation : And (upon supposition that
 these their sincere and hearty desires should be despised
 and contemned by the said judicatories) with an entreating
 of both Ministers and Elders, who regarded the covenant-
 ed Testimony of the Church of *Scotland*, and who desired

to

* This Assembly referred to the next General Assembly, the inflict-
 ing of what they reckoned just censure upon the seceding Brethren :
 “To which” (as their act bears) “they earnestly recommend to inflict
 “the censure of *deposition*, without further delay ; upon such of the
 “said defenders as shall not, betwixt and that time, either in presence
 “of the Commission to be named by this Assembly, or of the ensuing
 “General Assembly,—retract the said pretended Act and Declinature,
 “and return to their duty and submission to this Church.”

And the next Assembly did “actually depose” them “from the office
 “of the holy Ministry ; prohibiting and discharging them, and every
 “one of them, to exercise the same or any part thereof *within this*
 “*Church*, in all time coming.”

to be found faithful to the Lord,—that they would come out from the present judicatories, and from all ministerial communion with them; that they would make use of the keys of government and discipline committed to them by the Head of the Church, for the ends and purposes for which they were given them;—and that they would put to their hand, to lift up the standard of a Judicial Testimony for the born-down truths of God,—and for purging and planting the House of God in *Scotland*; according to the word of God, and our Reformation-principles agreeable thereto,—and after the example of our worthy progenitors, in the year 1638.

S T E P III.

The *Act* concerning the DOCTRINE OF GRACE.

THE Associate Presbytery having had under their consideration, for about two years,—an *Enlargement of their Testimony, with respect to some injuries done to the DOCTRINE of GRACE by several Acts of Assembly*; this matter was at length concluded, by an *Act* passed at *Edinburgh*,—on the 21st day of *October*, 1742*.

This act was afterwards published, bearing the following title, viz. [ACT of the *Associate Presbytery*, concerning the DOCTRINE of GRACE: Wherein the said Doctrine, as revealed in the *holy Scriptures*, and agreeably thereto set forth in our *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*, is asserted; and vindicated from the *errors* vented and published in some Acts of the Assemblies of this Church, passed in prejudice of the same: With an *Introduction*, discovering the rise and progress of the opposition to the Doctrine of Grace; and the reasons of passing and publishing this Act, in vindication of the same.]

In

* About an year before this time, the Reverend Mr *William Wilson* had been removed by death. But by this time there were *twelve* new Ministers in the Associate Presbytery, who had been ordained by them within about two years preceding; and, at the meeting here referred to, the Reverend Mr *Andrew Arrot*, Minister at *Dunnichen*, acceded to them: So that the Presbytery then contained *twenty* Ministers; only *two* of whom now remain in the Associate Synod, at the distance of about thirty-two years.

In the Preamble of this Act, they observe,—That “there
 “ has been a manifest departure from the purity of Doc-
 “ trine, as formerly professed in this Church and Land ;
 “ particularly by the present judicatories of this national
 “ Church, their tolerating and protecting the erroneous,
 “ supporting and countenancing error,—and their passing
 “ several acts in prejudice of, and contrary to the Doctrine
 “ of the Grace of God :” That “ the Assemblies 1720
 “ and 1722 adduce our *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*,
 “ in support of the several *erroneous propositions* contained
 “ in the acts of these Assemblies,—relative to a book in-
 “ titled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* ; whereby a
 “ blot and stain is cast upon these excellent standards, and
 “ many have been poisoned with the *legal doctrine* con-
 “ tained in the said acts,—and propagated through the
 “ pulpits of *Scotland*, under the mask and covert of being
 “ agreeable to the word of God and the foresaid stan-
 “ dards :”—And that “ this Presbytery, when they enact-
 “ ed and published their *Act, Declaration and Testimony*,
 “ —did, upon the grounds and reasons contained in the
 “ said act, condemn the errors vented by Mr *Simson* and
 “ Mr *Campbell* ; which either were not noticed at all, or
 “ but slightly censured by the present judicatories : But,
 “ by reason of the great variety of other matters contain-
 “ ed in the said act, and that a Judicial Testimony was
 “ then necessary without further delay ; the Presbytery
 “ could not, at that time, enter into such a particular en-
 “ quiry into the several acts of Assembly—that either dar-
 “ kened or directly impugned the Doctrine of Grace in
 “ the salvation of sinners,—as the importance of the sub-
 “ ject did require.”

But “ now,—in zeal for the glory of God, and the
 “ vindication of his truth ;—as also for contributing what
 “ in them lies, through grace, to put a stop to the spread-
 “ ing of *legal* and *Arminian* doctrine,—wherewith the
 “ whole land is like to be overflowed, to the ruin of many
 “ precious souls ;” (and from the consideration of solemn
 covenant-engagements): “ The *Associate Presbytery* did
 “ and hereby do judge it their duty, according to the
 “ powers given them by the *Lord Jesus Christ* as a judica-
 “ tory of his House,—to *assert* the truth, from the holy
 “ scriptures,

“ scriptures and our standards of Doctrine, concerning
 “ the *free grace* of God in the salvation of mankind lost ;
 “ in opposition to the corrupt doctrine vented in some acts
 “ of Assemblies, darkening and enervating the same.”

The *Act* contains a vindication of the *Doctrine of Grace*, against several injuries done to it,—by the Assemblies 1717, 1720 and 1722 ; with a view of evangelical subjection and obedience to the moral law : All which is represented in the following Abridgment *.

SECTION I. Concerning the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, by the Assembly 1717.

THE Assembly 1717, that same day in which they dismissed the process against Professor *Simson* in such a superficial manner,—condemned, in the strongest terms, the following proposition advanced by the Presbytery of *Auchterarder*, viz. *That it is not sound and orthodox to teach, that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God†* : For the General Assembly (*Act* 10.) “ declare their abhorrence of “ the fore said proposition, as *unsound and most detestable*.”

The Associate Presbytery cannot but with regret observe the manifest and glaring partiality of the judicatories, for many years past, with respect unto Doctrine : Shewing their

* In this Abridgment, these parts of the *Act* which are of a *particular* or *private* nature (respecting the Presbytery of *Auchterarder*, and the controversy about the meaning of passages in the book referred to) are omitted. The most part of the *Act*, which is of a *general* or *public* nature, is here exhibited ; with such abridgment thereof as seemed admissible, consistently with a proper view of the Doctrine contained in that act. The places of scripture, and of our subordinate standards, referred to,—are marked at the foot of the pages. The division here made into *Sections* and *Articles*, with so much of the titles under these as is not printed in *Italic* characters,—belongs not to the original state of the *Act*.

† This was one of some propositions which that Presbytery had agreed upon ; for putting a stop, in their bounds, to the spreading of *Arminian* and *Baxterian* doctrine,—which was then vented in many places of the kingdom : And as they required satisfaction of their young men concerning it, one of these had appealed against it to the General Assembly.

their displeasure, in several instances, against those who vented or published any thing in support of the scripture-doctrine,—concerning the *freedom of grace*, in opposition to the *Neonomian* scheme; and, upon the other hand, screening and protecting those who have vented opinions and tenets evidently favouring *legal* and *Arminian* doctrine. Was there any thing like an equal warmth shewn against any, or all the errors vented by Mr *Simson*, such as sap the very foundation of all revealed religion,—as in the the above case? No; the Assembly 1717 are at a deal of pains in their act, to palliate and excuse them: The worst they say of them is, that they are “expressions that bear, “ and are used by adversaries in a bad and unsound sense.” But when the above proposition comes upon the field,—although it has a manifest tendency to advance the *freedom of grace* in the application as well as the purchase of redemption, and was levelled against the legal doctrine of the times; yet the Assembly declare their *abhorrence* of it, as *unsound and most detestable*.

If this proposition is to be abhorred, as unsound and most detestable; *That it is not sound and orthodox to teach, that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God*: Then, according to that act of Assembly, it would be sound doctrine to teach,—*That a sinner must forsake his sin, in order to his coming to Christ*; or, which is the same thing,—*That it is a man's duty to forsake his sin, in order to his coming to Christ*. But this is evidently contrary to scripture. For,

1st, Since life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, the law binds to the observation of that *order* and *connection* of duties which is laid out in the word of Grace. And it is plain, that the *first* and *leading duty* required in the law, upon the revelation of the Grace of God in the promise of the gospel, is, to *believe that report* *. Hence it follows, that, according to scripture,—every act of the soul, as performed by a person before saving faith or coming to Christ, is sin; *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, and therefore cannot be a forsaking of sin.

2^{dly}, As the above act of Assembly is contrary to the scripture-order and connection of duties; so likewise it is
contrary

* Heb. xi. 6. John iii. 36.

contrary to that *order of gracious operation* held forth in scripture. For our *forsaking of sin* (being a branch of true repentance, importing purification of heart,—and the exercise of love, which is the fulfilling of the law) is in scripture expressly declared to be a fruit of faith; which faith is the soul's *coming to Christ* *. And to maintain, That we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, is as much as to say,—that we must have repentance, purity of heart and love, in order to our believing in Christ; that our forsaking of sin, which is the removal of the soul's disease, must be at least begun, in order to our coming to him who is the Physician; that we must repent of our sin, in order to our coming to him who is exalted to *give repentance* as well as forgiveness of sins: And that we must be holy, or so and so qualified, in order to our coming to Christ and having a vital union with him; which is the very soul of *Neonomian* and *Arminian* doctrine. This coming is indeed inconsistent with a resolution to go on in sin: Yet it is plain, that no sinner can wash himself, before he come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And it is vain to pretend to any gracious, evangelical or acceptable act,—but by virtue of grace and strength derived from Christ; or until the soul come to Christ and be united to him, as the living root and fountain of all gracious influence.

3dly, As *forsaking of sin* is no small part of conversion, so the above act of Assembly evidently tends to exalt man's natural powers; and his own ability to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto: And thus it greatly favours the *Pelagian* doctrine on this head; expressly contrary to scripture,—which declares that naturally we are *dead in trespasses and sins, without strength*, yea that our mind is *enmity against God*.

Wherefore the Presbytery did and hereby do, upon the grounds and reasons above-mentioned, CONDEMN the following Propositions as *unsound doctrine*, viz. (1.) That (notwithstanding the fore said gospel-order and connection of duties) mankind sinners must *forsake* their sin, *in order* to their coming to Christ and being instated in covenant

VOL. I.

Y

with

* Gal. v. 6. Acts iii. 26. v. 31. xv. 9. Zech. xii. 10. Isa. xlv. 22.

with God. (2.) That a natural man *can*, of himself, forsake his sin: Or that he can receive any strength from Christ, to *enable* him to forsake sin in a spiritual and evangelical manner; until, by the power of the spirit of Christ working faith in him, he come to Christ,—is united to him, and thus created in Christ Jesus unto good works. (3.) That any good or commendable qualifications are *required* or *expected* of sinners, in the gospel-call or offer,—in order to their coming to Christ, and being instated in covenant with God.—All which propositions are contrary to the doctrine held forth from the holy scriptures in our subordinate standards *.

And the Presbytery *acknowledge, assert and declare*,—That it is the duty of all, upon the revelation of Christ in the gospel, and without looking for any previous qualifications in themselves,—*instantly* to believe in him for salvation, both from sin and wrath; and that, in so doing only, they will be made, in a gospel-manner,—to mourn for sin, *forsake* it, and live unto righteousness: So that it is not *possible* for any man, of himself, to forsake his sins,—nor is it *consistent* with the divine method of grace held forth in the gospel, that a sinner should receive strength and grace to forsake his sins, or actually to exercise gospel-repentance; *until* he is determined and enabled, by the power of the spirit of faith, to look or *come* to Christ,—the Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.

Therefore, upon the grounds and reasons foresaid, the Presbytery *exhort and warn* all under their inspection,—to beware of every doctrine that has a tendency to pervert the gospel-order, in the manner above condemned; or to exalt corrupt nature, unto an ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: As the above doctrine, of *forsaking* our sin *in order* to our coming to Christ,—manifestly doth.

SECTION II. Concerning the Injuries done to the Doctrine of Grace, by the Assemblies 1720 and 1722.

OPPPOSITION to gospel-truth did yet further appear; when in the year 1720, the Assembly took occasion, from the reprinting of a book intitled *The Marrow of Modern*

* *Conf.* chap. ix. § 3. chap. xiv. § 2. *Larg. Cat.* quest. 32.

Modern Divinity,—to give a more deep wound to the gospel-doctrine of free grace; by condemning several precious and important truths, through the sides of that book,—in the 5th act of the said Assembly. And although, upon a *Representation* given in by some Ministers to the Assembly 1721, laying open the dangerous consequences of the said act; the Assembly 1722 asserted the truth, concerning some points of doctrine, in the express words of our Confession and Catechisms: Yet the said act of Assembly 1720 not only stands *unrepealed*, but its authority as a standing act in full force is *maintained* and *confirmed*; by act 7th Assembly 1722, entitled,—*Act concerning Doctrine, confirming and explaining the acts 5th and 8th of the General Assembly anno 1720.* And it plainly follows, that whatever truths may seem to be asserted by the Assembly 1722,—they can be understood in no *other sense*, than will agree with the acts of Assembly 1720.

And considering that, under the colour of condemning the said book, several important and precious truths are deeply wounded; and the purity of doctrine, contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, obscured and perverted: This Presbytery judge it their duty, to endeavour the preservation of the purity of doctrine, and that the same may be faithfully transmitted to succeeding generations; by *vindicating* the professed principles of this Church, from the injuries done to them in the above-mentioned acts,—and *asserting* the truth from the holy scriptures and our standards of doctrine, in opposition to the errors and mistakes contained in the said acts.

[The Assembly 1720, in their act concerning a book entitled the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*,—did condemn the doctrine of that book, under six general heads, *viz.* 1. Concerning the nature of faith. 2. Of universal atonement and pardon. 3. Holiness not necessary to salvation. 4. Fear of punishment and hope of reward, not allowed to be motives of a believer's obedience. 5. That the believer is not under the law, as a rule of life. 6. The six Antinomian paradoxes.—But the Presbytery begins with the *second* of these heads; “be-
“ cause of the relation that there is between faith—and the
“ gift or grant that God has made of Christ unto man-
“ kind in the gospel-promise, and the dependence that
“ Faith has thereupon.”]

ARTICLE I. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, under the Head of *Universal Atonement and Pardon*.

THE Assembly's judgment, upon the passages quoted by them from the *Marrow*, is,—“ Here is asserted “ an universal redemption as to purchase.”

There is nothing in these passages, that in the least countenances *universal redemption as to purchase*; a doctrine which this Presbytery rejects and condemns, as contrary to the Scriptures and places of our Confession and Larger Catechism quoted by the Assembly. The author of the *Marrow* has expressly declared himself for a *particular* redemption and representation; as he plainly teacheth, through the whole of his book, that Christ represented and suffered for *none but the elect*. Since then it appears, from the sense and meaning of the author, that these passages cannot be interpreted as favouring universal redemption as to purchase; there must be something else intended, by the condemnatory sentence of the Assembly.

And it will be obvious, from the tenor and strain of the Assembly's act,—that, under the misapplied title of universal redemption as to *purchase*, they condemn the universal and unlimited *offer* of Christ unto mankind-sinners *as such*. For though the Assembly 1722 seems to own, that the revelation of the divine will in the word affords a warrant to offer Christ unto all; and a warrant for all to receive him: Yet they can own that *warrant*, only in a consistency with their notion of *faith*; that is, a warrant only for the *elect*, or those who are *so and so qualified*, to receive Christ: But they do not own that mankind-sinners *as such*, however sinful and miserable, have any such warrant. And consequently, the revelation of the divine will in the word,—making such a gift of Christ to the world of mankind-sinners, as affords a warrant to offer Christ unto all without exception, or to preach the gospel to every creature,—and a warrant for all to receive him; and the sovereign grace that has made this grant or deed of gift, not to devils but to men; are encroached upon and injured, by the acts of both Assemblies 1720 and 1722.

The

The scripture expressly asserteth, *a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven* * : And therefore the receiving of Christ necessarily presupposeth a giving of him. There may be indeed a giving of Christ, where there is no receiving ; as this is the great sin of the generality of the hearers of the gospel, who will not come unto him that they may have life. But in no case could there be a receiving of Christ, if there were not a giving of him before ; or, which is the same thing,—a revelation of him in the word, affording a warrant for sinners as such to receive him. Now, this deed of gift or grant made to all mankind, in the word,—is the very foundation of our faith, and the ground and warrant of the *ministerial offer* ; without which no Minister could have authority to preach the gospel to every creature,—or to make a full, free and unhampered offer of Christ, his grace, righteousness and salvation, to all mankind to whom they have access in providence.

This deed of gift or grant of Christ in the word, unto mankind-sinners as such, is expressly set forth in several texts of scripture † : From which, the following truths are evidently clear.

1. Although the purchase and application of redemption be peculiar to the *elect* ; yet the warrant to receive Christ is common to *all*, as they are sinful men and women of *Adam's family* : *Unto you, O men, I call ; and my voice is to the sons of man* ‡.

2. The giving mentioned in these texts, is not to be understood of a giving into *possession* ; which is peculiar to them only who believe. But it is a giving by way of *offer*, whereupon one may take possession ; or such a giving as warrants a man to believe or receive the gift, and therefore must be *before* actual receiving : Even as the manna behoved to be given or rained down, before it could be tasted or fed upon. And thus *God gave his only begotten Son ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* : From whence it follows, that Christ is the Saviour of the world ; and his salvation

* *John* iii. 27.

† *Isa.* ix. 6. *John* iii. 16. vi. 32. *Acts* iv. 12. 1 *John* v. ii. *Rev.* xii. 17.

‡ *Prov.* viii. 4.

a *common salvation* * : So that mankind lost have a *common* interest in him, which fallen angels have not ; it being lawful and warrantable for us, not for them, to take possession of Christ and the whole of his salvation.

3. The persons to whom this grant and offer is made, are not the *elect* only ; but mankind considered *as lost*. For the *record* of God being such a thing as warrants *all* to believe on the Son of God ; it is evident, that it can be no such warrant, to tell men that God hath given eternal life to the *elect* : As the offering of a gift to a certain select company, can never be a warrant for all men to receive or take possession of it.

This will further appear, if it is considered,—that the great sin of *unbelief* lies in not believing the *record*, that *God hath given to us eternal life*. Unbelief doth not consist in a mere disbelieving of this proposition, That God hath given eternal life to the *elect* : For the most despairing unbeliever may be persuaded hereof, and their belief of it adds to their anguish and torment. But they do not set to their seal that God is true, on the contrary they make God a liar ; in not believing the record of God, even that he hath *given to them* eternal life in his Son Jesus Christ : As hereby they deny the faithfulness of God in that record ; and his being indeed in earnest, in that grant and gift of Christ made unto sinners *as such* in the gospel. They slight and despise the authority of the God of Grace ; commanding them to give this answer of a particular applying faith, unto the offer of his grace in his word,—and his call to receive the same. And so flying in the face of God's Record and Testimony, they deservedly perish in unbelief ; seeing the kingdom and gift of God was brought near to them in the offer of the gospel, and they would not take it.

The above doctrine, concerning the *gift* of Christ in the word unto mankind-sinners, is likewise from the holy scriptures asserted in our Confession of Faith † : Where it is plain, that the offer of life and salvation is unto mankind considered *as sinners* ; and that therefore sinners, as such, have a warrant to believe or receive the unspeakable gift of

* *Jude*, ver. 3.

† *Conf.* chap. vii. § 3.

of God,—according to the scriptures quoted in the Confession *.

Wherefore the Presbytery did and hereby do, for the grounds and reasons above-mentioned, *acknowledge, declare and assert*,—That God the Father, moved by nothing but his free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of *gift* and *grant* of his Son Jesus Christ unto mankind in the word; that whosoever of them all shall receive this gift by a true and lively faith, shall not perish but have everlasting life: Or, which is the same thing, That there is a revelation of the divine will in the word, affording a warrant to offer Christ unto all mankind without exception,—and a warrant to all freely to receive him, however great sinners they are or have been; and that this gift is made to *mankind* only, and not to fallen angels;—according to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures in our Confession.

And the Presbytery hereby *reject* and *condemn* the following tenets and opinions, contained in or couched under the fore said acts of Assembly. (1.) That the free, unlimited and universal offer of Christ in the gospel, to sinners of mankind as such, is inconsistent with *particular* redemption: Or that God the Father his making a deed of gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son shall not perish but have everlasting life,—infers an *universal atonement* or redemption as to purchase. (2.) That this grant or offer is made only to the *elect*, or to such who have *previous* qualifications commending them above others.—Which doctrines are quite contrary to the Scripture, and our Confession of Faith.

ARTICLE II. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, concerning the Nature of Faith.

THE General Assembly 1722, in their 7th act confirming and explaining the 5th act of Assembly 1720, vindicate the said act upon this head; and particularly condemn the author of the *Marrow*, for making that to be the justifying act of saving faith,—“A man’s being
“persuaded that Christ is *his*, and that *he* shall have life
“and

* Mark xvi. 15. John iii. 16.

“ and salvation by him ; and that whatsoever Christ did for
 “ the redemption of mankind, he did it *for him.*” And
 all the account which that Assembly give of faith, is as
 follows,—“ That a belief and persuasion of the mercy of
 “ God in Christ, and of Christ’s ability and willingness to
 “ save all that come unto him, is necessary unto justifying
 “ faith.” They speak of no other assurance in faith, but
 this ; which is a persuasion that devils and reprobates may
 have.

It will be obvious to any who considers these places of
 scripture, and passages of our Confession and Larger Ca-
 techism, quoted by the Assembly, (for shewing that *assu-*
rance is not of the essence of sense),—that they speak di-
 rectly of the *assurance of faith* or reflection ; (whereby
 believers are certainly assured, that they are in a state of
 grace, upon the evidence of these *marks* which the Lord
 has given of his own work in the soul) ; and not of the
assurance which is *in faith*, in the direct act thereof,—
 and which is founded upon the *word* only. The question
 is not here concerning the *present state* of the *person* ;
 which he is called to examine, according to the rules of
 God’s word : But the question is concerning the *nature* of
 that *faith* which all the hearers of the gospel are called
 unto ;—and which the scripture plainly describes to be a
believing in God and a *trusting* in his salvation, a *receiving*
 of Christ, a *believing* the record that God hath given to
 us eternal life,—that he will be *our* God, and that *we* shall
 be his people ; and so calling him *our* Father, *our* Husband,
our God,—upon the warrant of his own word of grace.

There is a great difference between the *assurance of our*
state of grace, and the *assurance of the promise* of salva-
 tion ; or an assured faith of righteousness and salvation in
 Christ Jesus,—as held forth to every sinner to whom the
 gospel comes, to be received and applied by them for
their own benefit. The assurance spoken of in the articles
 of our Confession of Faith and Catechism cited by the
 Assembly, is an assurance that the faith which *we have* is
 indeed the faith of God’s elect ; or that we are *already in*
a gracious state ; and a believer may wait long before he
 obtain this assurance, according to our Confession and Ca-
 techisms :

techisms : Yet this says nothing against a man's being persuaded that Christ is *his*, as held out and made over in the promise unto *him*. From all which it follows, that these passages of scripture and our standards do by no means condemn the assurance which is in the *direct act* of faith ; or the *appropriating* persuasion of faith, corresponding to the gift of Christ in the gospel. And since the above act of Assembly plainly doth this, (when it is therein expressly denied to belong to the justifying act of faith,—“ A man's being *persuaded* that Jesus Christ is *his*, “ and that *he* shall have life and salvation by him ; and “ that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of man- “ kind, he did it *for him*”) : It is therefore necessary to vindicate this account of justifying faith, as agreeable to the holy scriptures and our standards of doctrine ; while the excluding of an *appropriating persuasion* from the nature of faith, tends effectually to shut that door of access unto the Lord Jesus which God has opened,—by the grant made of Christ in the gospel to sinners of mankind, in exclusion of the angels that fell.

I. That the general nature of *faith*, as it is opposite to unbelief or doubting, consists in a persuasion of the reality of what is testified,—is what cannot be well refused : And it can as little be reasonably denied, that, where the Testimony to be believed is a promise of good to be communicated,—a man's faith of that testimony necessarily includes his believing the certain accomplishment of that promise to *him* ; and his confidence in the person who has given the promise, that he *will do* as he *has said*. And it is no less evident, that when an offer is made in a word of grace, to be received by faith ; a person does not by faith receive that which is offered, unless he believe it is *his*,—by virtue, or upon the warrant of that offer made of it to him. Yet the *particular* persuasion above-mentioned—is that which the Assembly here denies to belong to the nature of justifying faith : And thereby do really turn justifying faith into that *Papist* general faith *abjured* in our national Covenant ; or they make it a faith to be built, in whole or in part, upon something wrought in or done by us.—That justifying faith has in it an *appropriating persuasion*, or a man's being persuaded that Christ is *his* in particular, is further evident from the following reasons.

1st, When a man's conscience is truly awakened and convinced by the spirit of God, he sees *himself* in particular bound under the curse *. And therefore faith must *appropriate* and apply Christ as made a curse for the sinner in particular, to deliver *him* from the curse of the law: Otherwise the gospel-revelation and offer of Christ could not be found *suited* to the man's particular case; neither would the free gift be found *as full* unto *justification*, as the offence through the law unto condemnation†. A man having only a general faith of the law, as condemning sinners in general,—will easily rest in a general faith of the gospel; or of Christ's willingness and ability to save sinners, or to save them that come to him: So when one is brought to a particular faith of the law, as what is particularly directed against *him* for his condemnation; his conscience cannot be satisfied, nor will it absolve him, or be purged from guilt,—till he has got the special faith of the gospel, or of the mercy of God in Christ as reaching to *him* in particular.

2^{dly}, A man's being persuaded that Christ is *his*, is necessary to answer the *call* or *offer* of the gospel; according to the deed of gift or grant that God has made of Christ in the word. Salvation is offered to *every one* in particular, that hears these glad tidings †: And therefore it is certain, that faith, which is the answer of the soul to the call of God in the gospel, must lay hold on salvation for the person *in particular*. If a man is not influenced by the holy Spirit, to *appropriate* to himself the *common salvation*, or what did lie before in common in the gospel-offer; he cannot be said to receive or close with Christ *as offered* therein. The act of faith, corresponding to the Testimony of God, must certainly be an *appropriating* persuasion; *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness*. And this no way contradicts what is frequently found in the sad experience of the believer, who may want the comfort of his faith a long time: For *doubting* can no more be said to be in the nature of *faith*, (because it frequently takes place in the believer, by reason of prevailing unbelief and indwelling sin),—than darkness can be said

* Gal. iii. 10.

† Gal. iii. 13. Rom. v. 18,—21.

‡ Acts ii. 39. iii. 26. xiii. 26. Isa. xlv. 22, 24.

said to be in the nature of the sun, because he is sometimes eclipsed; since faith and doubting are in their own nature opposite.

3dly, We cannot but deny the Lord's *name* revealed to us, without this appropriating persuasion that he is *ours*. Thus he speaks to the whole visible Church, *I am the Lord your God*: His name is *The Lord our righteousness, a light to the Gentiles, salvation unto the end of the earth*. And as he commands to proclaim his name, and preach this gospel to every creature; so the answer of faith, which corresponds to this Testimony and Record of God as the foundation of it, must be,—He is the Lord *my* righteousness, *my* light, *my* salvation, *my* God: otherwise we refuse to own him by that name by which he has revealed himself to us, and do thus deny his name.

4thly, The *command* of God does further evince this truth. For, in the Preface to the Ten Commandments, God makes over himself to sinners as *their* God and Redeemer: And as all the Commandments are directed to every one in particular, so the *first* requires every one to know and acknowledge the Lord to be *his* God and Redeemer. Our *trusting* in God belongs to the acknowledging of him as the only true God and *our* God*: And so there can be no trusting in God, without faith's persuasion of his being *our* God; no trusting in Christ, without faith's persuasion that Christ is *ours*.

5thly, The appropriating act of faith is further illustrated, from the *Covenant-relation* betwixt Christ and the whole visible Church; commonly set forth under the similitude of a *marriage-relation* betwixt husband and wife†. Thus, when the Lord would reclaim a backsliding Church from defections and apostasies; he is pleased to urge them thereunto, from this marriage-relation‡. Now the answer of faith which God challenges, and promises to make his grace sufficient, for,—is in terms of appropriation||. And when they actually turn to the Lord,—they take up their relation to him by covenant, as the leading motive of their return by faith§. Indeed, this appropriation of faith just corresponds to the promise or grant of grace made

* *Larg. Cat.* quest. 104.

† *Isa.* liv. 1.

‡ *Jer.* iii. 1, 14.

|| *Ver.* 4, 19.

§ *Ver.* 22.

made to the visible Church,—as the echo to the voice; *I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God* *.

II. The Assembly moreover deny, that it belongs to the justifying act of faith,—a man's being persuaded, *that he shall have life and salvation by Christ*. But there can be no true faith without this persuasion, in some measure or degree: For it is the same thing with a believing on the Son, or a resting on him for salvation. None can believe on Christ, trust in him or rest on him for salvation; without some degree of persuasion, that *they shall have life and salvation by him*,—from sin as well as from wrath. Without this, we do not set to our seal that God is *true*, in his *promise* and *record* †: Nor give the only suitable answer of faith unto his call, of looking unto him for salvation. And accordingly, we find the saints of God, in scripture, expressing themselves in the terms of this persuasion ‡.

III. The third part of the description of faith condemned by the Assembly, is,—*That whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for you*. But this branch of the persuasion of faith, the Apostle affirms || — What Christ did for the redemption of mankind, was his obedience unto death in their room: And this is that surety-righteousness which he has wrought for us, and for the sake of which the Lord is well pleased. Now this perfect righteousness is brought near to every one of us in the gospel; and is laid in *Zion* as the foundation of our acceptance with God, and hope of eternal life and salvation. So that this persuasion must, in connection with the former, enter into the nature of that faith which answers the call and revelation of God in his word: And herewith we find the faith of the operation of God corresponding §.

Upon the whole, the Assembly, by condemning the above description of faith,—have both condemned the scripture-account of the true nature of faith, and also the scriptural *order* in which faith appropriates or closes with its object. For the *first* thing to be believed, or to be persuaded of, upon the grant that God has made of Christ

unto

* *Zech. xiii. 9.* † *John ii. 25. v. 11.* ‡ *Act. xv. 11. Mic. vii. 7.*

|| *Gal. ii. 20.* § *Isa. xlv. 24.*

unto mankind sinners in the word, is,—that *Christ is ours* : Upon which there will follow, according to the measure of faith, a persuasion that *we shall have life and salvation by him*, and that *whatsoever he did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for us* *.

This

* The writer of this Abridgment thinks proper to subjoin here, what he hath formerly observed upon the same subject, (in a Preface to a new edition of Dr Owen's *Treatise of Redemption*), viz. The Associate Presbytery do teach, in their *Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace*,—that this persuasion is competent to a person, in the language of justifying faith, viz. “Jesus Christ is mine, I shall have life and salvation by him; and whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for me.” Thus, faith immediately terminates upon a *present* special interest in Christ, *Jesus Christ is mine*; as to which, it proceeds upon the present *revelation* and *offer* of him in the gospel, *looking out* to that,—without *looking back* to any divine purposes or intentions: And, according to the mysterious order of grace, the Lord gives *truth* to this special interest; at the time of faith's applying Christ to the soul; the person being actually invested with his justifying righteousness, and accepted in the sight of God on that account,—which never becomes *true* in the case of any, till the moment of believing. In the next place, it is quite inseparable from the faith of this *special* interest in Christ, and must lie in the same act of faith,—to believe eternal salvation by Christ; *I shall have life and salvation by him*. Now this faith of a *special* saving interest in Christ—must likewise by the same act, in this due order, terminate upon a special interest in all his redeeming work; *whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for me*.

As to which last article, we may observe,—that it is entirely different from a believing, that *Christ intentionally died for the person in particular*: As this faith is the same, upon the matter, with the faith of *election*; which, however attainable it be, can noway belong to faith as *justifying*. But when Christ with his whole salvation is applied by faith, upon the ground of the gospel-offer and call; then *whatsoever he did for the redemption of mankind*, doth therein actually terminate upon the person,—and is believed so to do. Wherefore, as to the plea of justifying faith, [*whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for me*]; the meaning is not, *for me*, by a foregoing *purpose* and *intention*: But the meaning is, *for me* by a following *issue* and *termination* thereof upon me; through the gospel-offer and call, embraced by faith.

As when a traveller is entertained in a house upon his way,—he eats what is set before him, without any question; just upon seeing that, in its nature, it is every way *suitable* and *sufficient* for his need,—and that he is *freely invited* to the use thereof. And his very *eating* of the food implies a concluding that all the *preparation* of it was *for him*; because the preparation of it terminates in him, by the food itself doing so: Which yet is entirely different from his being otherwise informed and believing,—that the food was *intentionally* provided and made ready for him, before he saw it.

This account of the nature of faith—is the same with what is contained in our approved standards of doctrine before the year 1647, viz. “ True faith is an *assured assurance*, kindled in my heart by the Holy Ghost, by which I rest upon God ; *making sure account* that forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and life, is *bestowed*, not only upon others, but also *upon me* ; and that freely by the mercy of God, for the merit and desert of Christ alone *.” “ Regeneration is wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost ; working in the hearts of the elect of God an *assured* faith in the promise of God, revealed to us in the word ; by which faith we apprehend Christ Jesus, with the graces and benefits promised in him †.” Unto which agrees the Catechism of the famous Mr *James Melvil* ; in the answer to that question, What is Faith ? “ It is my *sure belief* that God both may and will save *me* in the blood of Jesus Christ ; because he is almighty, and has promised so to do.”

The real agreement and harmony betwixt the more *ancient* and *later* way of describing faith, is declared by the acts of Assembly 1647 and 1648, receiving and approving the *Westminster* Confession and Catechisms ; in which it is expressly asserted, That the said Confession and Catechisms *are in nothing contrary to the received doctrines of this Church* : Which they would not have said, if they had not thought,—that the defining of faith by a receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel, did imply that fiducial act or *appropriating* persuasion whereby they ordinarily described faith before that time. However, our Confession and Catechisms are clear enough upon this head,—Faith is said to differ in many, not as to *assurance*, but as to the *fulness* of assurance ‡. “ Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner ; whereby—he *receiveth* and *resteth* upon Christ and his righteousness,—for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of *his person* righteous in the sight of God for salvation ||.” “ Faith justifies a sinner,—only as it is an instrument by which

* *Palatine* Catechism, taught in this and other reformed Churches.

† *Old Conf.* Art. iii.

‡ *Conf.* chap. xiv. § 3.

|| *Larg. Cat.* quest. 72.

“ which he *receiveth* and *applieth* Christ and his righteousness *.” “ By faith they receive and apply unto *themselves* Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death †.” “ The Preface of the Lord’s Prayer teacheth us,—to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and *our interest* therein ‡.” “ Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel ||.”

Wherefore the Presbytery did and hereby do *acknowledge, declare and assert* ; That, in justifying faith, there is a real persuasion in the heart of a sinner,—that *Christ is his*, that *he shall have life and salvation by him* ; and that *whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for him* : Upon the foundation and ground of the gift or promise of Christ in the gospel, that is made to sinners of *Adam’s family as such* ; and so there is in it a resting upon him alone, for the whole of this salvation.

And the Presbytery do hereby *reject and condemn*, for the above reasons, the following doctrines taught in the fore said acts of Assembly. (1.) That saving and justifying faith *is not* a persuasion in the heart that Christ is ours, that we shall have life and salvation by him ; and that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for us. (2.) That *all* the persuasion in justifying faith is only *a belief and persuasion of the mercy of God in Christ ; and of Christ’s ability and willingness to save all that come unto him* : This being such a faith as *Papists and Arminians* can subscribe unto, in a consistency with their other errors and heresies. (3.) That one must *first* come to Christ and be a true believer, *before* he appropriate Christ and the whole of his salvation to himself, upon scripture-ground and warrant : Whereby the true nature of faith is subverted.—All which tenets and opinions are contrary to the word of God, and the passages of our Confession and Catechisms referred to.

ARTICLE III.

* *Larg. Cat.* quest. 73. † *Quest.* 170. ‡ *Quest.* 189.

|| *Short Cat.* quest. 86.

ARTICLE III. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, under the odious Title of *Holiness not necessary to Salvation*.

THE Assembly 1720 cites some passages of the *Marrow*, to prove the author's erroneous opinion (as they alledge), that *holiness is not necessary to salvation*. The Assembly 1722 alledge, that one of these passages will "plainly bear his rejecting of the law; as it requires good works to be done (by a justified person) and the commandments to be kept, in order to obtain salvation." But the author is there shewing, that the believer is altogether delivered from the law as a *covenant of works*: Which doctrine is so far from *denying* that holiness is necessary to salvation, that it *establishes* the necessity thereof in its own place.

This Presbytery do cordially acknowledge and maintain the *necessity* of holiness and good works, in their own place: That they are *necessary*, as an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, and in obedience to his command,—and as being the end of our election, redemption, and effectual calling; *necessary*, as a part of that salvation which is begun here and perfected hereafter; *necessary*, as being expressions of our gratitude, and as being a special design of word and ordinances; *necessary*, for making our calling and election sure: And, as is contained in our Confession of Faith *,—"Good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of adversaries, and glorify God." But as the author of the *Marrow* nowhere denies, but plainly asserts the necessity of holiness in the above or like respects, (the passages condemned by the Assembly—having a manifest relation to the believer's plea against the law's demand of perfect personal obedience); so, from the whole tenor of the Assembly's act, it is obvious,—that they want to bring in our own holiness or good works as having a *causal influence*

* Chap. xvi. § 2.

fluence upon our eternal salvation, and as a federal and *conditional* mean thereof: Which tends to overthrow the whole scripture-doctrine of compleat righteousness and salvation, only in and through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In vindication of the 8th act of Assembly 1720, (enjoining Ministers to preach the doctrine of the necessity of an holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness), the Assembly 1722 say,—“ it relates to the obtaining of enjoyment and possession; and not of right and title to everlasting happiness, which all justified persons have already attained.” And in the same act they assert, that it is of dangerous tendency to teach,—“ That the law acknowledges no works for obtaining salvation, but such as found a title to it before the Lord; whereas (say they) the law requires good works in order to the obtaining salvation, though they do not found a title to it.”—The plain scope and tendency of all this, is to countenance and pave the way for the *Arminian* and *Baxterian* doctrine; of the *gospel* its being a new, proper preceptive law with sanction,—binding to faith, repentance, and other duties which are consequential to the entrance of sin and the revelation of the grace of God in the gospel; our personal obedience to which, is necessary for our obtaining everlasting happiness: For though the Assembly owns that the righteousness of Christ founds our title; yet, according to them, we ourselves are to work for the possession.

This will further appear, from the express words of the act of Assembly 1722, viz. “ There have at this time been published several positions and expressions, of a pernicious and dangerous tendency; such as, [That in the *gospel*, properly so taken, there are no precepts, the commands of faith and repentance not excepted; that holy obedience is not properly a federal or conditional mean, nor has any kind of causality, in order to the obtaining of glory]. Where it is obvious, that,

1st, The Assembly holds it as a truth, that, in the *gospel*, properly so taken, there are precepts; and that the commands of faith and repentance are among that number.—If the *gospel* be taken largely, (for a system of all the doctrines, promises, precepts, threatenings and his-

stories, which any way concern man's recovery and salvation); then, no doubt, all the precepts which belong to, or are deducible from the law of the Ten Commandments, are contained in it: Many of which precepts (such as of faith, repentance, and the like), having a manifest connection with the entrance of sin, could not be promulgated before the gospel was revealed. But then, *all* these precepts are reducible to the law of the Ten Commandments; though they had no due and proper objects, nor occasion of being exercised, in an innocent state.

And therefore, if the gospel be taken *strictly* and properly, as it is contradistinct from the law, it is a *promise*; containing glad tidings of a Saviour, with grace, mercy and salvation in him,—to lost sinners of *Adam's* family*. Thus there are no precepts in the gospel, taken in its proper sense: All precepts (these of faith and repentance not excepted) belong to the law; which, according to the nature of it, (being a perfect and compleat rule of all internal as well as external obedience, either expressly or by necessary consequence),—must fasten the *new duty* upon us, the same moment that the gospel reveals the *new object*: According to the doctrine held forth from the Scriptures, in our Larger Catechism †.

Besides, if the law does not bind sinners to believe and repent; then faith and repentance, considered as works, would enter into the ground of our justification before God. For the scripture considers all works properly done by us, as *works of the law*; and, under that character, excludes them from the ground of our justification in the sight of God: Wherefore, if faith and repentance are not works of the law, they are not excluded from, but must belong to the ground of our pardon and acceptance.—And this doctrine is the foundation of the *Neonomian* error; which establishes the necessity of another righteousness in our own persons, agreeable to a *new gospel-law*, beside the righteousness of Christ,—as the *immediate* ground of our acceptance and confidence before God. And it evidently lands in the *Pelagian* universal grace: For if there

* *Gen.* iii. 15. *Isa.* lxi. 1, 2, 3. *Luke* ii. 10, 11. *Rom.* x. 15. *Gal.* iii. 8.

† *Quest.* 104, 105.

there be a new law, which was never given to *Adam* in innocency,—*Adam* never lost that grace whereby that new law is to be obeyed; and if so, he who gave that law behoved in justice to give new universal grace, wherewith to obey it.

2dly, In consequence of the above doctrine, of precepts in the gospel properly so taken; the said Assembly maintains,—that holy obedience is properly a *federal* or *conditional* mean, and has *some kind of causality*, in order to the obtaining of glory. It cannot but be matter of the deepest humiliation to all the true lovers of Zion, that ever such doctrine should be inculcate by the authority of the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*; whereby so wide a door is opened to *Arminian* and *Socinian* errors, which like a flood have overflowed this Church and Land. —Nor will it vindicate the Assembly, that they speak of obtaining the *enjoyment* and *possession* of everlasting happiness by a holy life; but not a *right* and *title* to it, which they allow that all justified persons have already attained. For,

1. The condemned passages of the *Marrow*, on this head,—speak not of salvation *completed*, or everlasting happiness in heaven; but of salvation *commenced*, or begun on earth: And many places of scripture speak as the author does, of salvation *obtained already* in this life*. Now surely we hold our *possession* of this begun salvation, not by *our works* or holy life,—but by *grace*, as it reigns through the righteousness of Jesus Christ unto eternal life: While the Assembly's restricting the term *salvation* unto the *complete* enjoyment of salvation, is plainly for the sake of this dangerous principle; that though our faith and good works are not meritorious or the cause of our *justification*,—yet they are the cause of our *eternal salvation*, a federal and conditional mean thereof.

2. Whereas the foresaid act of Assembly declares,—that the obtaining of everlasting happiness is meant of obtaining the *enjoyment* and *possession* thereof; and not of a right and title thereto: It will follow, in a consistency with this act, that it is sound doctrine to teach,—that we obtain
the

* *John* iii. 36. *Eph.* ii. 8, 9. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. ii. 10. *Tit.* iii. 5.
† *Pet.* i. 9.

the *right* to heaven and eternal life by *Christ's* doing and obedience; but we obtain the *possession* of it by *our own* doing or personal holiness. But the scripture asserts, that not only the right and title, but also the possession, both the begun and compleat possession,—are purchased and obtained by the blood of *Christ* *: Though holiness, being a great part of that salvation whereof believers are here possessed,—is also necessarily connected with, and preparative unto the full possession of eternal life hereafter. And what strange divinity would it be in heaven, to say,—Though we cannot boast that we have obtained a *right* to heaven, yet we have obtained the *possession* of it by our holy life: Our *title* to this salvation we now enjoy, was obtained by *Christ's* obedience; but our *possession* of it was obtained by *our own* obedience †.

The passages of the *Marrow* condemned by the Assembly, viz. [“If the law say good works must be done
“and the commandments must be kept, if thou wilt obtain salvation; then answer you and say,—I am already
“saved before thou camest, therefore I have no need of
“thy presence: For in *Christ* I have all things at once,
“neither need I any thing more that is necessary to salvation; *Christ* is my righteousness, my treasure and my
“work: I confess, O Law, that I am neither godly nor
“righteous; but yet this I am sure of, that he is godly
“and righteous for me”]:—These being the words of the great reformer *Martin Luther*, (wherein he expresses the perfection and extent of *Christ's* active obedience in our room, answering both the *godliness* and the *righteousness* required in the law,—and answering the law-charge against the believer, as being neither *godly* nor *righteous* in himself and in the eye of the law); were never before quarrelled or condemned by any *Protestant Church*. Indeed, as the believer has no plea, in answer to the law's demand of satisfaction to justice for sin,—but the sufferings of *Jesus Christ* our Surety; so he has no plea, in answer to the law's demand of *perfect obedience*, for entitling him to eternal life and salvation,—but *that* which here stands condemned by the Assembly. For the law demands of every

* *Eph.* i. 11, 14. 1 *Theff.* v. 9. *Heb.* ix. 12.

† *Rev.* v. 9. vii. 10.

every man a *nature* perfectly innocent and holy, while demanding a life perfectly righteous: And since we have neither the *one* nor the *other* in ourselves, we must have them *both* in Christ; else we must remain under the condemnation of the law. Wherefore, as there is a *personal* holiness and righteousness of life begun in every true believer, which shall be carried on and perfected in the work of sanctification; so there is in Christ a perfect, complete holiness of *nature* and righteousness of *life*,—which is *imputed* to the sinner, in the moment of believing, for his justification in the sight of God: And consequently, [*Christ is godly and righteous for me*],—is the only answer that the believer can give to the law's demand of good works to be done, and keeping the commandments, for obtaining salvation *. So that if we have recourse in the least to our personal holiness, as the ground, in whole or in part, of our *enjoyment* of grace here or glory hereafter; we dishonour both the law and lawgiver,—and rival it with the Son of God, by seeking to divide the glory of our salvation with him.—And as this is contrary to our own Confession of Faith, so likewise to the doctrine of other reformed Churches:—"The perfect *satisfaction*, *righteousness* and *holiness* of Christ is imputed " and given unto me; as if I had neither committed any " sin, neither were any blot or corruption cleaving unto " me: Not only the perfect *righteousness*, but even the " *holiness* of Christ also is imputed and given unto me: " The *satisfaction*, *righteousness* and *holiness* of Christ " alone, is *my righteousness* in the sight of God †."

Wherefore the Presbytery do hereby *declare* and *assert*,
 (1.) That the *gospel*, properly and strictly taken as contradistinct from the law, is a *promise*,—containing glad tidings of a Saviour, with grace, mercy and salvation in him, to lost sinners of *Adam's* family; and consequently, *all precepts* (these of faith and repentance not excepted) do, in a strict and proper sense, belong to the *law*.
 (2.) That, as the suffering of Jesus Christ our Surety is the believer's only plea, in answer to the law's demand of
satisfaction

* *Rom. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 30. Conf. chap. xi. § 1.*

† *Palatine Catechism.*

satisfaction to justice ; so the complete and perfect conformity of the Surety to the law, in *nature* and *life*,—is the believer's only plea, in answer to the law's demand of *perfect obedience*.

And the Presbytery did and hereby do, upon the above grounds, *condemn* the following tenets and opinions, (1.) That the *gospel*, strictly taken,—is a new, proper and preceptive *law* with sanction ; binding to faith, repentance, and the other duties which are consequential to the revelation of the grace of God. (2.) That though the righteousness of Christ only founds our *title* to eternal glory ; yet it is our *personal* holiness, or our own obedience to the new law, upon which we obtain the *possession* thereof. (3.) That our personal holiness or good works have a *causal influence* upon our eternal salvation, and are a *federal* and *conditional* mean thereof ; in which sense, the Assembly's directing Ministers to preach the necessity of an holy life in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness,—is of very dangerous consequence to the doctrine of *free grace*.—All which positions are contrary to the Scriptures, and the passages of our Confession and Larger Catechism referred to.

ARTICLE IV. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, under the Head of *Fear of Punishment and Hope of Reward*—not allowed to be Motives of a Believer's Obedience.

WHAT the doctrine delivered by the author of the *Marrow*, upon this head, amounts to,—may be clearly seen from the pages quoted by the Assembly ; and is plainly this, *viz.* That *legal, mercenary* hopes ought not to influence the believer's obedience, on the one hand ; nor *servile, slavish, legal* fears on the other :—Or that, on the one hand, the believer is not to be influenced to obedience, by the fear of his falling under the eternal loss of the favour of God, and under his eternal displeasure in hell-fire,—contrary to that unalterable state of favour into which the believer is brought ; neither is he to fear, that even temporal punishment shall be inflicted upon him in a way of vindictive wrath ;—both which are unsuitable to
that

that full assurance of faith (of the Lord's unchangeable love and of a saying inviolable relation to him), which the believer is always called to maintain and hold fast with steadfastness: And, on the other hand, that believers are not to be influenced to obedience by the hope of reward, or hope of heaven as the reward any way *due* to their obedience; that is, either purchased or procured or to be obtained, by any works of righteousness done by them,—and so a reward of debt, as if their works were meritorious either in themselves or by paction;—which is inconsistent with the whole method of grace revealed in the gospel; and particularly with the lively faith believers are called to maintain, of their obtaining heaven and glory, even the full possession of eternal life,—by grace or free gift, and not by works.

As to what the *law of Christ* promiseth or threatens, the scope of the author of the *Marrow* is,—That though the believer is called to expect to share of the discipline of his Father's family in the case of transgression, and to entertain a deep sense of the awfulness of his Father's frowns and rods; yet he is called more and more to grow in the genuine spirit and disposition of the children of God,—so as to have the love of his Father more and more the motive of his obedience, rather than the fear of the rod:—And that the believer's reward (in the enjoyment of God himself) is not the reward of service done by him, and so not the reward of *servants*; but the inheritance of *sons*, secured to the believer,—previous and without all respect had to his obedience, as the price in whole or in part, or any federal condition of the possession of it.

And thus, as the believer ought to have in his eye the depth of that misery he has by grace escaped,—and to regard and deeply consider the threatenings of that eternal wrath and misery, as they discover what even his sins in themselves deserve; that he may be thereby excited to adore the love of his Redeemer in delivering him from so great a death, and to thankful obedience to him for the same*: So the believer is also bound to lay to heart the threatenings of fatherly chastisements,—as they are evidences of his heavenly Father's detestation of sin, exciting
him

* 2. Cor. v. 14, 15.

him to abhor it the more ; and likewise as evidences of his Father's love, in correcting him for his profit,—that he may be a partaker of his holiness. And the believer ought to have the reward continually in his eye, to animate him in running forward to the full possession ; not to obtain it as the hire or reward of his running,—but to hasten to it, because it is freely made over unto him.

Such views as these the believer is called to take, of what is promised and threatened. Nevertheless it is quite another thing, and contrary to the genuine exercise of the Christian as such,—to be influenced by the promise and threatening ; as if his obedience were the *procuring cause*, or proper federal ground or condition, of his freedom from the punishment and enjoyment of the blessing : Seeing all boasting is excluded by the gospel ; so that the believer's only plea is the free, sovereign mercy of God in Christ. Thus, the ground of expectation before God, or of confidence in his sight,—is surely not our obedience, either to the law of works or the law of Christ : And therefore the motive to obedience ought not to be any *servile respect*, either to what the law of works or the law of Christ either promiseth or threateneth.

But as the Assembly (by their afore said acts 1720 and 1722) condemn the expressions used in the *Marrow*, without any distinction ; so, by what they say,—they give too evident ground to think, it is in the above-declared view and sense of the words that they condemn them as erroneous : And that it is the scope and design of their acts, to assert a believer's duty of yielding obedience,—from a principle and upon the motives of legal, servile fears and hopes. They allow no other legal, servile hope of heaven,—but the hope of obtaining a *right* and *title* to it by our works ; insinuating, that no other regard to the reward in our obedience can be reckoned mercenary : And they assert, that the hope of obtaining the *possession* and enjoyment of heaven by our obedience—is not mercenary ; whereby they understand, that the holy obedience of believers is properly a federal and conditional mean and cause of their enjoying eternal life. And thus, they divide the glory of our enjoying salvation between Christ and the creature, as to the ground of the hope thereof ; while they

they plainly say,—that believers are to be influenced in obedience by these hopes of heaven which are, at least in part, to be founded upon their own obedience, as the proper federal condition thereof: Whereby the whole gospel is perverted; and another foundation laid, than that which God has laid in Zion*.

True, spiritual obedience flows from, and is influenced by faith's view of the love of Christ; casting out that fear of wrath and punishment which necessarily hath torment in it†. And on the other hand, it is not influenced by any servile, legal hope of reward; or any view of a legal or federal connection between the obedience and the enjoyment or possession of the inheritance, which is by promise alone.—Neither is there the least countenance given to the opposite doctrine, by these scriptures where the everlasting inheritance is expressed under the notion or by the title of *reward*; seeing this reward (being infinite) can only be purchased by an infinite price, even that price given by *Immanuel*. And this reward is declared to be given to us, not of *debt* but of *grace*,—*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifyeth the ungodly*: And to be *the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Thus the believer, in his respect to this recompense of reward, is called to act,—not for life as the reward of his service; but from the faith of his certain enjoyment of that life, as the reward of the service of the new *Covenant-head*: And the more he thus views it, the more should and will he be animated to chearful obedience.

Wherefore this Presbytery, for the necessary vindication of truth, manifestly injured by the said acts of Assembly,—did and hereby do *assert, maintain and declare*,

1. That it is a precious gospel-truth,—That believers, being heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and having it not by the law but by free promise through Jesus Christ; ought not to be influenced in their obedience, by the hopes of obtaining the possession and enjoyment of the inheritance—

VOL. I.

2 B

tance—

* Luke i. 74, 75. xvii. 10. Rom. iv. 4, 5, 16. v. 21. vi. 23. xi. 6. Eph. ii. 9, 10. Gal. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14. v. 4, 5. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. Conf. xii. 1. xiv. 2. xx, 1.

† 1 John iv. 18, 19. Psal. xxvi. 3.

tance—by any works of righteousness or obedience done by them.

2. That as they should be moved to obedience from the consideration of the excellency of the heavenly inheritance, even of God in Christ as their inheritance and exceeding great reward,—and by many other motives : So particularly they are to be influenced by this motive, that they have got the begun possession of this inheritance ; and have the full possession thereof secured by rich and free promise through Jesus Christ,—being made *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*.

3. That though the believer ought to entertain an holy awe and dread of the Majesty of God,—and of the awfulness of his threatenings and judgments, both temporal and eternal, against sin and sinners ; and to consider from them what even *his* sins in themselves deserve : Yet he is not called to be moved or excited to obedience to the precepts of the law (either as it is a covenant of works or as it is a rule of life) by the *fear* of falling into hell, for omitting duty or committing sin : But is ever called fully to believe his infallible security from going down into that pit, through the ransom which God hath found ; so as, through the firm and lively faith of this his safety in a state of favour with God, to have his heart more and more filled with that *love* which casteth out tormenting fear,—and will be natively exercised in chearful gospel-obedience to all the Lord's commandments.

4. That though believers should remember and seriously consider, that there is *discipline* in their Father's family ; and believe that they may expect it, when they transgress his law and keep not his commandments : Yet, as this discipline is instituted on account of remaining corruption in them,—so the consideration thereof ought to excite them more and more to improve the blood of Jesus Christ by faith, for draining and mortifying this corruption ; and particularly for subduing and removing the *legal bias* and disposition, which is the strength of sin in them ;—that thus they may be more and more made to serve in *newness of spirit*, and not in the *oldness of the letter*.

And the Presbytery do, in like manner, *condemn* the following positions ; as dangerous, unsound and erroneous,
—contrary

—contrary to the passages of Scripture and of our Confession referred to :

1. That there is a *legal connection* instituted, between the obedience of believers and their enjoying rewards,—with escaping punishments, temporal or eternal ; or that the Lord deals with them in this matter upon *law-terms* : And that their hopes of enjoying the one and escaping the other, are to rise and fall according to the measure of their obedience.

2. That a person's being moved to obedience by the hope of heaven—cannot be said to be *mercenary*, in any other sense than that of a hope of obtaining a *right* and title to it by his own works : And that a believer ought to be moved to obedience, or to eschew evil and do good, by the hopes of his enjoying heaven, or any good temporal or eternal, by his own obedience,—as the federal, conditional mean and *cause* thereof.

ARTICLE V. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, under this Head, *That the believer is not under the Law as a Rule of Life.*

THE Assembly 1720, pretending to prove against the author of the *Marrow* his maintaining this error,—*That the believer is not under the law as a rule of life* ; for proof, they cite and condemn these words, *viz.* “ As the “ law is the covenant of works, you are wholly and al- “ together set free from it ; you are now set free, both “ from the commanding and condemning power of the “ covenant of works.”—The Assembly 1722 declare, “ That it was not the meaning nor intention of the said act “ in the least to insinuate, that believers in Christ are un- “ der the law as a covenant of works ; or that they are “ obliged to seek justification by their own obedience ;— “ in regard the Assembly did apprehend, that the author “ understood by the *covenant of works*—the moral law “ *strictly and properly taken.*” And in the same act, they condemn the following position (taught by the *representing brethren*) “ That the law, as to believers, is really divested “ of its promise of life and threatening of death ;” adding, —“ if by the law they understand the moral law, the rule “ of life.” Now,

1st, They find fault with the author of the *Marrow* for asserting,—That “the moral law, strictly and properly “taken, signifies the covenant of works;” and that, as *such*, the believer is wholly and altogether set free from it: As if his speaking in this manner did afford any proof, of his maintaining that the believer is not under the law as a *rule of life*; pretending that the gospel-doctrine, delivered in this strain, tends some way or other to looseness,—or to loose the believer from his obligation to the law as a rule of life. Whereas in our Larger Catechism [*Quest.* 93. What is the *moral law*?], the answer given is a strict and proper definition of the *covenant of works*: From which (“moral law as a covenant of works”) the said Catechism [in answer to *quest.* 97.] asserts believers to “be delivered, “so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned;” neither under the command of it to be justified, nor under the threatening of it to be thereby condemned.

2^{dly}, They make these two propositions to be *one* and the *same*, viz. *That believers in Christ are not under the law as a covenant of works*; and, *That they are not obliged to seek justification by their own obedience*. But if these two propositions be the same, then the believer is no otherways freed from the covenant of works *after* he is a believer than he was *before*,—he was as much delivered from the law as a covenant of works *before* he believed, as *since*; for *then*, he was as little obliged to seek justification by his own obedience as he is *now*: Yea the *believer* is no more delivered from the law as a covenant of works, than the *unbeliever*; who is as little obliged to seek justification by his own obedience, as the believer is.

Our Lesser Catechism speaks in this manner; “When “God had created man, he entered into a covenant of “life with him upon condition of perfect obedience.” Instead of this, the form of the covenant of works is altered by the said act of Assembly; from man’s being obliged to *perfect obedience* for life, unto his being obliged to *seek* life and *justification* by his obedience: Which is not at all the proper form of the covenant of works, but a consequence from it; and such, as the covenant of works might have been fulfilled without regarding it. For if *Adam* had performed the obedience therein required, he
would

would have been justified ; though he had never *sought* or *aimed* at his own justification by it, but merely aimed at the glory of God his creator : And though he was to have life by or for his obedience, yet he could never seek or *claim* life by it,—*till once* he had performed it perfectly.

So dangerous is the altering the words of our standards by any such untenable gloss, that it will plainly follow,—that *all men*, especially such as are under the outward dispensation of the gospel, are delivered from the command of the law as a covenant of works ; because *none of them* are obliged to seek justification by their own obedience : And if they be not under the *command* of the covenant of works, how can they be under the *curse* of it?—But it is plain, that though the law or covenant of works be a *broken*, yet it is a perpetually *binding* law : And though the sinner be an *insolvent* debtor, yet the debt, both of obedience and satisfaction, *lies upon his head* ; as long as he is under the law,—and not under grace, through union to Christ the second *Adam*, who came to pay that double debt : From which believers in Christ are alone free ; through the imputation of his law-fulfilling and justice-satisfying righteousness unto them.

The proper form of the *commanding* power of the law, as a covenant of works,—lies in the connection between *personal obedience* and *eternal life* : And this connection still binds the unbeliever, both under an obligation to that *obedience* which had life promised to it,—and under the forfeiture of that *life* (by his disobedience) which the law promised. This standing connection (between *obedience and life* and *disobedience and death*) holds him a prisoner to the law and justice of God,—as long as his debt to both is not paid : Under an obligation, not to seek justification by his own obedience ; but to despair of life and justification by the law,—and to expect death and condemnation by it, according to the sentence thereof passed against him *. This also makes him need to seek life and justification by the obedience and death of Christ : For if he were not under the foresaid binding obligation of the law, both as to the *do* and *die* of it ; he would not need to seek justification to life, nor salvation from death,—by the doing and dying, the obedience and satisfaction of Jesus Christ.

But

* *Gal.* iii. 10.

But the act of Assembly 1722, does so much cloud and darken this truth,—that it plainly supposes *none* are under the law as a covenant of works, *except those* that are under an obligation to seek justification by their own obedience: And this being an obligation *none at all* are under, whether believers or unbelievers; the common and valuable privilege of *all* hearers of the gospel, in their being obliged to seek justification *only* through the obedience and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, is thus quite subverted;—and at the same time, the great distinguishing privilege of *believers* (in being not under the law but under grace) is, by this act, quite overthrown and turned to nothing.

3dly, The Assembly 1722 owns, in their act, that it is a precious gospel-truth,—*That believers are free from the law as it is a covenant of works*: But from their condemning, in the same act, the following position,—“That the law, as to believers, is really divested of its promise of life and threatening of death;” it is evident, that they keep the *believer* both under the commanding and condemning power of the law,—equally with the *unbeliever*.—For if the law, as to the believer, be not really divested of its *promise* of life; then he is under the *commanding* power thereof,—so that his obedience, as such, hath the promise of life: And thus he must have another law-title to life and eternal salvation, than Christ’s obedience. And if the law, as to the believer, be not really divested of its *threatening* of death; then he is under the *condemning* power thereof: So that his sin and disobedience, even after he is in a justified state, brings him under a legal obnoxiousness to eternal death.

This doctrine is not only highly injurious to the revelation of the grace of God, concerning the believer’s privilege; but is also dishonouring and discrediting to the righteousness of Christ our Surety.—Notwithstanding of his *doing*, upon which alone the believer’s legal title to eternal life stands,—and his *dying*, upon which alone the believer’s legal security from eternal death stands; yet the believer, by this corrupt doctrine, is kept both under the *do* and *die* of the covenant of works: Under the *do*, because the law hath still the promise of life as to him; and under

under the *die*, because the law hath still the threatening of death, even as to him : And so, he hath neither legal security for life by Christ's doing ; nor legal security against death by Christ's dying.

It will not solve the matter, that the Assembly adds ; *If by the law they understand the moral law, the rule of life.* For if this have any meaning at all, it must import their making the moral law, as it is a *rule of life*, to believers,—to have a *promise of life*, and a *threatening of death* ; or to be a law giving life to them upon their obedience,—and denouncing death and damnation to them, upon their disobedience : Which seems a turning the gospel into a law ; or the law as a *rule of life* in the hand of Christ, into a law or *covenant of works*,—speaking life to the doer, and death to the transgressor. And so, the matter comes still to the same issue ; though they would seem here to explain what they condemn.

And that the believer, according to the Assembly, is still kept under the law as a *covenant of works*, will further appear if it is considered ; that though they seem to deny, that believers in Christ are under the law as a covenant of works : Yet while they assert that the law, as a rule of life, is not divested of a *promise of life* and a *threatening of death*, (which, according to our Confession, is the proper notion of the law as a covenant of works) ; they likewise maintain,—that holy obedience is properly a *federal* or *conditional mean*, and has some kind of *causality*, in order to the obtaining of glory : From which it plainly follows, that believers are still kept under the covenant of works. But whatever law they will have the believer under, as a law of life or death,—it is plain that he is under *no such law* *.

Therefore this Presbytery did and hereby do *acknowledge, assert and declare*,—in opposition to these foresaid acts of Assembly upon this head :

1. That whatever the law as a covenant of works promisseth or threatens, in itself and as to them who are under it ; yet, as to the believer, it is really *divested* of the promise of life and threatening of death : And that the believer

* *Gal. iii. 18, 21, 22.*

liever holds his legal right and claim to eternal life, only by the perfect obedience of Christ to the law in his room; and his legal security from eternal death, only by the compleat satisfaction of Christ to the justice of God in the threatening of the law;—and not by any law having promise of life to his own obedience, or threatening of death to his disobedience *.

2. That as the moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof: So, to assert that the moral law, strictly and properly considered as a *covenant of works*, is what the believer is wholly and altogether *set free from*,—will never prove against the asserter, that he maintains the believer *is not* under the law as a *rule of life*. And the Presbytery maintain,—that, as the law is a covenant of works, believers are wholly and altogether set free from it, both from the commanding and condemning power thereof; or, as our Larger Catechism expresses it,—“delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are “neither justified nor condemned:” And that, from the maintaining of this truth, it will noways follow,—that the believer is not under the law as a rule of life.

3. That though it be the duty of all who hear the gospel, to seek after life and justification by the obedience of Christ; and not by their own: Yet, while through unbelief they do not so, they *remain* under the law as a *covenant of works*, both in its commanding and condemning power; and that it is the peculiar privilege of true believers in Christ, to be set free therefrom.

4. That though *all unbelievers* do remain under the law as a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power; yet *none* of them are obliged to seek justification by their own obedience: But, on the contrary, it is the great duty of all the hearers of the gospel, and also their inestimable privilege,—to seek justification only through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ.

And the Presbytery do hereby likewise *condemn* these following *positions*, which are countenanced by the foresaid acts of Assembly upon this head; as injurious to truth, and

* *Ism. v. 20, 21.*

and opposite to the Scriptures,—and our Confession of Faith and Catechisms :

1. That the doctrine of the believer's being freed from the law as a covenant of works, whether in its commanding or condemning power,—is a doctrine tending to *licentiousness*; tending any way to free the believer from the obligation of the law, as it is a rule of life *.

2. That the believer *his not being under the law*, and *his not being obliged to seek justification by his own obedience*,—are propositions of the same import: As if unbelievers, under the gospel-dispensation, were equally free from the commanding power of the law as a covenant of works—with believers; since they are not obliged to seek justification by their own obedience, any more than believers. The Presbytery therefore *condemn* this doctrine, as highly prejudicial to the truth,—relating both to the law and the gospel; and to the distinguishing privilege of the believer in Christ, his being not under the law but under grace.

3. That the *law*, as to believers, is vested with a *promise* of life and *threatening* of death; so that their obedience is properly a federal or conditional mean, in order to their obtaining eternal glory.

4. That unbelievers, in their being under the law as a covenant of works,—are obliged to seek justification by their own obedience.

ARTICLE VI. Of the Injury done to the Doctrine of Grace, under the Head of (what the Assembly calls) *The Six Antinomian Paradoxes.*

THE Assembly 1720 do simply condemn six propositions, called by them *Antinomian Paradoxes*; the most of which are the express words of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, and so must needs have a sound sense, *viz.*

1. That a *believer is not under the law, but is altogether delivered from it.* 2. That a *believer doth not commit sin.* 3. That *the Lord can see no sin in a believer.* 4. That *the Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins.* 5. That *the Lord doth not chastise a believer for his sins.* 6. That a

VOL. I.

2 C

believer

* Rom. iii. 31.

believer hath no cause, neither to confess his sins, nor to crave pardon at the hands of God for them; neither yet to fast, nor mourn, nor humble himself before the Lord for them.

The author of the *Marrow* gives his judgment concerning these propositions: That, “in one sense, they may all of them be *truly affirmed*; and, in another sense, they “may all of them be *truly denied*.” And for shewing in what sense he *admits*, and in what sense he *rejects* these propositions; he distinguisheth between the law as it is the *law of works*, which he explains to be the law considered as a covenant of works: And the law as it is the *law of Christ*; by which he understands the law considered as a rule of obedience in the hand of Christ,—who hath, as their Surety, fulfilled the righteousness of the law as a Covenant, in the room and stead of his people.

The Assembly condemn this distinction which he makes use of,—for ridding marches between the state of an *unbeliever*, who is condemned already by the sentence of the broken law; and the state of a *believer*, for whom there is no condemnation: And for shewing in what sense the believer in Christ is *bound to obey the law*, and in what sense he is *delivered from it*. And, by condemning the above distinction, the Assembly have overclouded many precious truths; which cannot miss to issue in a jumbling *law* and *gospel* together,—and the bringing of believers under a spirit of *bondage and fear*, from which they are delivered by the spirit and grace of the gospel.

The Assembly 1722, for their own exoneration, say,—that the Assembly 1720 do only condemn the above distinction of the law [into the law of works and the law of Christ], *as it is applied by the author* (of the *Marrow*) for defending the six *Antinomian paradoxes*: From whence it necessarily follows, that these six points of doctrine are condemned by the Assembly,—*according to the sense* put upon them, by the author’s applying to them that distinction of the law into the *law of works* and the *law of Christ*; or, as the author explains himself,—the law as a *covenant*, and the law as a *rule of obedience*. And so, these precious truths of the everlasting gospel—lie buried under a *condemnatory* sentence of the General Assembly of this national Church, for above twenty years backward, *viz.*

1st, That

1st, That believers are not under the law as a covenant, but are altogether freed from it; though they are still under it as a rule of obedience.

2^{dly}, That a believer doth not commit sin, as it is a transgression of the law of works; but, when he sinneth, he transgresseth the law considered as a rule of holiness in the hand of a Mediator.

3^{dly}, That God sees no sin in a justified believer, under the covert of the perfect righteousness of Christ,—as a transgression of the law of works; though he still sees and marks it, as a transgression of the law of Christ.

4^{thly}, That the Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins, with a vindictive wrath; but with a fatherly displeasure.

5^{thly}, That the Lord doth not chastise a believer for his sins as an implacable enemy, with law-vengeance; but with the rod of a father, not for their destruction but for their reformation.

6^{thly}, That though the sins of believers, considered as transgressions of the law or covenant of works, do deserve eternal death; and though they are even many ways aggravated above the sins of others: Yet seeing their sins, considered as transgressions of the law or covenant of works, were laid over upon Christ; therefore a believer, when he fasts and mourns for and confesseth his sins,—ought to view them as laid over upon Christ, purging away their guilt by his blood: And, in the faith of forgiveness through the righteousness of Christ, and of his deliverance thereby from the commanding and condemning power of the law of works,—he is to fast and mourn for and confess his sins, as to his concern with them in his justified estate, not as violations of the law of works; but only as violations of the law in the hand of a Mediator,—and as committed against, and dishonouring to his reconciled God and Father in Christ.

Thus, by the doctrine of the foresaid act, the foundation of all evangelical obedience is overturned,—the wells of salvation, out of which we should draw water with joy, are stopt; and we are sent back to the law as a covenant,—to seek righteousness, life and comfort. Wherefore, in order to clear and maintain the foundations of gospel-obedience,

dience, and the springs of the believer's consolation ; this Presbytery did and hereby do *acknowledge, assert and declare,*

1. That the distinction, as explained in the *Marrow*, is good and scriptural, *viz.* That there is a wide difference between the law as a covenant of works, and the law as a rule of holy obedience.

2. That a believer in Christ is neither under the commanding nor condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works ; although he be still under the law as a rule of obedience, in the hand of a Mediator.

3. That God seeth not iniquity in *Jacob*, or in true believers, as it is a transgression of the covenant of works ; but only as it is a transgression of the law in the hand of Christ, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

4. That though the elect by nature be children of wrath, even as others ; yet, through the death and satisfaction of Christ,—the Lord's vindictive anger is turned away from, fury is not in him against any soul that is come to the blood of sprinkling : And yet he may and will be angry with his dear children, so as to visit their iniquity with the rod, and their transgressions with stripes ; but, because he will not take his love from Christ, nor break his covenant with him,—therefore not with them, who are his seed.

5. That when a believer fasts, mourns for and confesseth his sins,—he ought not to do it in a legal way, as one standing under a covenant of works, either as to its precept or penalty ; but he ought to do it with the hand of faith upon the head of the great Sacrifice and Atonement, as one whose person and duties are accepted in the Beloved : And thus he ought to fast, mourn for and confess his sins, before his reconciled God and Father ; believing that God, according to his promise, is merciful to his unrighteousness and will remember his sins no more.

Moreover the Presbytery did and hereby do *condemn and reject* the following erroneous and dangerous positions, taught by the Assembly ;

1. That believers are under the law, and not altogether freed from it,—as a covenant of works,

2. That

2. That when a believer sins, he sins against the law of works; and therefore must be liable to the penalty thereof.

3. That God seeth iniquity in believers, as it is a violation of the old covenant of works made with *Adam* in innocency; and consequently that he seeth it with an eye of vindictive justice: Notwithstanding of the satisfaction of *Christ*, and of their being under the covert of his law-magnifying righteousness.

4. That when God is angry with believers for their sins, he pursues them upon the footing of the law of works; or, which is the same thing,—with the same anger wherewith he pursued the Surety, when he was made a curse for them.

5. That when God corrects his children, he does it in his vindictive and revenging wrath; and not in a way of fatherly chastisement.

6. That when a believer fasts, mourns for, confesseth, and seeks pardon of sin; he is to view himself as guilty of the violation of the law of works,—notwithstanding of his being dead to the law, through faith in *Jesus Christ*.

SECTION III. A View of Evangelical Subjection, and Obedience to the Moral Law.

HAVING thus essayed to vindicate the *Doctrine of the Grace of God*, from the injuries done to it by the acts of Assembly 1720 and 1722; as also the obligation of the holy law as a rule of obedience, every where asserted through the foregoing act of Presbytery: Yet, because of the strong propensity of corrupt nature to turn the grace of God into licentiousness; the Presbytery judge it expedient to conclude this their Act by shewing that the holy law, as a *rule of duty* is still *obligatory* under the gospel; yea, that the *gospel* yields *stronger* and more powerful incitements to obedience,—than any thing which the *law* itself, abstractly considered, can afford.

ARTICLE I.

ARTICLE I. *Concerning the Obligation of Obedience unto the Law.*

THAT the holy law, as a rule of duty, is still obligatory under the gospel, will appear from several considerations.

I. The law, under the dispensation of the gospel, is called the *law of CHRIST* *: plainly intimating, that the law of the Creator is now issued forth to us in the hand of a Mediator ; and, that we, in our obedience, are to eye the authority of God in him, to *hear him*, as the King whom God hath sett upon his holy hill of Zion. Agreeably to this, the moral law is called the *royal law* † : For the whole law, and every article thereof, carries upon it a stamp of the royal authority of this King of saints ; who have it engraved upon the tables of their hearts, by the power of his Spirit.

II. The law is given upon *evangelical*, and so upon *everlasting* grounds. It is worthy of notice here, by what arguments the Lord enforces obedience ; in the preface to the ten commandments ‡. The first is,—his *infinite greatness* and *immutability*, as J E H O V A H. But this argument alone is so awful, that it is ready to dismay and drive us sinners away from God : Therefore he next draws us under his sweet and gracious government with *bands of love* ; when he adds, *I am thy God*. Obedience to the law is next enforced, by the glorious work of man's *redemption* through Jesus Christ ; typified by the redemption of Israel from their *Egyptian* bondage.—And all this is well expressed in our Lesser Catechism.

III. The end of Christ's coming was not to *destroy* the law, but to *fulfil* and *establish* it ||. He hath fulfilled it as a covenant, by his own personal obedience as our surety : and he gives it forth, as a perpetual rule of obedience to us §.—It is true indeed, that Christ has for ever freed believers from the yoke of the ceremonial law : And also from the commanding and condemning power of the moral law as a covenant ; rigorously exacting obedience as
the

* Gal. vi. 2. John xiv. 15. 1 Cor. ix. 21. † James ii. 8.

‡ Exod. xx. 1, 2. || Matth. v. 17, 18. Rom. iii. 31.

§ Luke i. 74, 75.

the condition of life, and forbidding sin under the pain of eternal death,—without affording strength for obedience. But Christ would not have it enter into the thoughts of any who profess his name, that he came to dissolve the obligation of the law as a rule of life. And thus he vindicates it from the corrupt glosses of the scribes and pharisees, in his sermon on the mount; wherein he discovers its obligation, extent, and spirituality,

IV. Obedience and conformity to the holy law, is one of the great ends of our redemption by Jesus Christ *. Wherefore they dreadfully counteract the very design of the death of Christ, and of the reign of grace through his righteousness,—who imagine that the doctrine of grace patronizes a lawless liberty in the way of sin: As Christ died, not for procuring a liberty *to sin*, but a liberty *from sin* †.

V. All the followers of Christ are expressly charged to *remember the law of Moses*; even after the actual rising of the Sun of Righteousness, in his incarnation,—and after his saving manifestation in their souls ‡: That law of *Moses* which was published by God on mount *Sinai*; which was written by God's finger on tables of stone, as a binding rule of obedience unto the end of the world.—Such a regard had Christ unto this law, and the honour of it,—that he not only fulfilled the righteousness of it as a covenant, by his holy obedience; but in his example hath left us a pattern of all gospel-holiness. And he requires all who are called by his name, that they depart from iniquity; that they follow him, and be holy as he is holy: And declares that except their faith in him bring forth the fruits of obedience to his law, their faith is dead. Accordingly, at the last day, their faith in him will be tried by the fruits thereof ¶.

Thus it appears, that the grace of the gospel doth no way dissolve the obligation of the royal law as a rule of obedience; but that on the contrary, it doth establish and sweeten the same. Christ is the great Mediator, through whose hands the law is transmitted to us; and this serves wonderfully to sweeten it: For he reconciles the

* *Titus* ii. 14. † *P. i.* 18, 19. ‡ *Dan.* ix. 24. § *John* iii. 5, 6.

¶ *Mal.* iv. 2. 4. || *Matth.* xxv. 34.—45.

the law to sinners, and reconciles sinners to the law.—He reconciles the law to the sinner that believes in him * : Though the law, as it is in the hand of an absolute God, is an enemy to the sinner out of Christ,—condemning and pursuing him † ; yet so soon as he is in Christ, it neither condemns nor pursues him,—but it becomes a friendly counsellor, to direct him in the way of duty. And Christ reconciles the heart of the sinner to the law ; insomuch that he delights in the law of the Lord after the inward man, and esteems all God's commandments concerning all things to be right.

And all this Christ sweetly effectuates, by the execution of his several offices.—As a *Prophet*, he interprets and opens up the law in its purity and spirituality. As a *Priest*, he satisfies justice for our sins ; covers our obedience, perfumes our services, and procures our acceptance by the sweet incense of his intercession. And, as a *King*, the great God our Saviour,—he transmits the law to his subjects with the stamp of his authority.

ARTICLE II. *Concerning the Evangelical Grounds of Obedience to the Law.*

THE law in the hand of a Mediator, or as it stands in subordination to the grace of the gospel,—is not to be considered as a rule of acceptance for justification ; but as a rule of obedience and sanctification : By which obedience we testify our gratitude, and glorify God. And,

I. Our obedience to the law is to proceed upon *evangelical principles*.—The leading principle of obedience to the law, is faith in Christ Jesus ; hence all true obedience is called the *obedience of faith*. The spirit of life enters into the dead soul, and works faith in it ; whereby it is united to Christ as a head of influence. All acts of obedience, performed by an unbelieving sinner, are but dead works : Whereas all acts of obedience in believers, are acts of the *life of Christ* in them †.

II. Gospel-obedience to the holy law, proceeds upon *evangelical motives* ; the consideration of the matchless grace, love, and mercy of God,—manifested in Christ.

As

* Rom. viii. 1. 33, 34. Gal. v. 23.

† Gal. iii. 10.

‡ Gal. ii. 20.

As God's love to us moved him to do all he hath done for us, in the work of redemption; so that faith which worketh by love—makes the soul active to do all for his glory and honour *.

III. Gospel-obedience is influenced by *evangelical affections*; love, delight, zeal, filial fear,—and the like. As one fire kindles another; so the love of God, apprehended by faith, kindles a fire of love in the heart toward God. The love of *self* influences the obedience of the legalist; but the love of *Christ* constrains the believer: And this love begets delight, a ready mind, and fervency of spirit in serving the Lord †.

IV. Gospel-obedience is performed to a *gospel-end*; which is the honour of Christ, and the glory of God in him. Christ is called *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *First* and the *Last*; so ought he to be unto us in the whole of our obedience, the beginning and the ending of all we do. The unregenerate sinner acts *from* himself and *for* himself. But *Christ* is the first principle of the believer's life of holiness, and his last end therein: Christ only must bear the glory of what he hath wrought for us; and of what he works in us or by us, in a way of doing or suffering †.

Upon the whole, as obedience to the holy law of God was indispensibly required of innocent man; by an obligation necessarily arising from the very nature of the Creator and creature, and the essential relation betwixt them: So, mankind having sinned, and come short of the glory of God; the whole dispensation of the free grace and love of God, through Jesus Christ,—is just calculate for restoring fallen man unto a capacity of glorifying God, in time and eternity, by obedience to the eternal and holy law ||. Thus, gospel-obedience is of such importance to the dispensation of grace, as to be a principal end to which that dispensation is essentially subservient,—and to which it only is effectual: So that, according to the believer's experience and improvement of the free grace and love of God in the gospel; accordingly he will necessarily, through the whole, aim at and press forward unto a glorifying of God,—by perfect conformity to his holy law. But the peculiar en-

VOL. I.

2 D

couragement

* *Psal.* cxvi. 12.

† *Psal.* cxix. 35. *Rom.* xii. 11.

‡ *Rev.* v. 12.

|| *Eph.* i. 4. *Tit.* ii. 13, 14. *John* xv. 8.

couragement and access we have unto holiness, under the dispensation of grace, lies in this; that gospel-obedience must be performed, not to justify our persons,—but to honour, glorify, and declare our gratitude to him who *justifies us freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Now, man being at first married to the Law as a husband,—he hath a strong propensity to cleave to this husband, or to seek life and salvation by doing the works thereof: And it is only the power of efficacious grace, which can bring a sinner to renounce that first husband; and to take on with that new and better husband, who is raised from the dead. Yea, after a soul is actually married to Christ,—it is ready at every turn, through the remaining legality of the heart, to cast a sly look back upon its old husband, the law of works*.——There are therefore sundry *legal ends* that should be avoided; whether in our covenanting, or in any other acts of obedience. As,

1. We must not perform the duties of the law, for righteousness and justification; which is to blot out that name of Christ, *The LORD our Righteousness* †. Nor,

2. To give unto a God a requital or recompense for his mercies. It is indeed the highest ingratitude, not to acknowledge him as our benefactor; but we can never recompense him, can never give any thing to him but what is his own ‡.

3. We must not imagine that, by our acts of obedience, we make God amends for the dishonour done to him by our disobedience; nor that thereby we make any atonement or propitiation for our sins: As this were to put our obedience in the room of Christ, our only propitiation.

4. Neither must we imagine that, by our obedience and duties, God is moved to bestow his mercies upon us: For whatever God bestows upon a sinner, is of mere grace and mercy; not for any works of righteousness done by us.

5. We must not imagine, that our obedience to the law doth any way fix our title to eternal life; or that it is any federal,

* Gal. iii. 3.

† Jer. xxiii. 6.

‡ Job xxv. 7. Luke xvii. 10.

federal, conditional mean,—in order to our possessing eternal life. This were indeed to lay another foundation, than that which God hath laid in *Zion*: For both our title to eternal life, and our actual possession thereof at the end of the day,—do lean wholly upon our union with Christ, by a faith of God's operation; and another foundation can no man lay. All our hopes and expectations of life and salvation, must be founded upon God's covenant of grace and promise,—established with the second *Adam*; the condition of which was fulfilled by him, the covenant-head, in his obedience unto death *.——Now faith, acting upon this covenant of rich and free grace, has a manifest influence upon our obedience to the law: Which may be cleared in considering,

ARTICLE III. *The Connection betwixt God's Covenant of Grace and our Covenant of Duties, and the Influence the one has upon the other.*

THE Covenant of Grace, which is made with and stands fast in Christ our glorious Head,—lays us under much further obligation to duty and service than the Covenant of Works, even while it stood in the first *Adam*. And our obligation to vow and pay our vows, to covenant and perform or keep our covenants of duty and service to God in Christ,—is yet more strengthened and furthered; by our being under a fuller and clearer dispensation of the covenant of grace, than what these had who lived under the Old Testament,—or the dark, legal dispensation of this covenant of grace. How the obligation is strengthened, and what influence the *covenant of grace* has upon our *covenants of duty*,—may appear in the following respects.

1. In respect of *life*; which Christ came to give, and to give more abundantly †. Our life being hid with Christ in God,—the more of this is communicated to us, the more are we in case for lively service; and bound to devote the life that comes to us by the death and life of Christ, unto the obedience of him who died for us ‡.

2. In respect of *light*; which shines more brightly in the gospel. The light given there to inform the mind, transform

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

† John x. 10.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 15.

transform the heart, and reform the life,—obliges us to walk as children of light *. The more we see, in gospel-light, how Christ hath saved us,—by fulfilling the law perfectly for us as a covenant of works; the more we are constrained to glorify him, by our conformity to the law as a rule of duty and obedience †.

3. In respect of *liberty*. Spiritual liberty is greater and more glorious, by the more plentiful effusion of the spirit in the gospel-dispensation of the covenant of grace,—than what we could have had by the old covenant of works, or the old legal dispensation of the new covenant; a freedom that looses us from sin, and binds us to duty ‡.

4. In respect of *love* and *gratitude*; to which nothing leads us so much, as the display of the love and grace of God to us in the new covenant. This love kills our enmity and begets our love ||: Being drawn powerfully with bands of love, we run cheerfully in the way of his commandments.

5. In respect of *joy*; which the knowledge of the joyful sound of the gospel brings in most plentifully, even joy unspeakable and full of glory. This joy of the Lord is our strength, encouraging us to walk in the light of his countenance; and joyfully to devote ourselves and our service to him §.

6. In respect of *hope*. As the gospel opens the door of faith, that we may enter into Christ and close with him for sanctification as well as righteousness; and so be in case for the duties of holiness outwardly, having the heart purified by faith to the exercise of grace inwardly: So the gospel opens the door of hope, even the hope of heaven and eternal life,—at the end of our course of gospel-obedience. We are *begotten again to a lively hope*; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure ¶.

7. In respect of *power*, or divine virtue and efficacy; whereof especially the gospel-dispensation of the new covenant is the channel. It has not only a moral, argumentative

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 6. Eph. v. 8. † Gal. ii. 19, 20. Rom. vii. 4.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 8,—11, 17. John viii. 36. Rom. vi. 17, 18. Psal. cxvi. 16.

|| 2 Cor. v. 14.

§ Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16, 17.

¶ 1 Pet. i. 3. 1 John iii. 2, 3.

tive influence upon holiness; but also a physical and powerfully operative influence,—drawing us with bands of love unto his service, and pulling down the strong holds of sin which stand in opposition thereunto *.

8. In respect of the *promise* of the covenant of grace; as it is a covenant promising all grace, both habitual and actual. Grace for performing every duty required in the precept of the law, is given forth to us in the promise of the gospel. We have here the promise of the spirit, in the plentiful effusion thereof, to make us fruitful in holiness; the promise of strength, to walk and run in the way of the Lord; the promise of recovery, in case of failures and decays; and the promise of perseverance to the end, in a course of gospel-obedience. And as we cannot set about vowing, or resolving to perform any duty commanded in the law,—without the grace promised in the gospel; so this is to be apprehended and depended upon by faith, as the great encouragement to vow and resolve upon obedience †.

9. In respect of the *authority* enjoining obedience, and calling us to devote ourselves and our service to the Lord. Though this authority is originally the same that enjoined obedience upon man in the first covenant; yet it appears to us more amiable or lovely, by its being the authority of God in Christ,—reconciling the world to himself. While God is related to us as our God and Redeemer, we are laid under the strongest obligations to duty and obedience; according to the import of the Preface to the Ten Commandments.

10. In respect of the *furniture* we have in our new Covenant-head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Having in him righteousness for acceptance,—and strength for assistance in every duty, particularly in solemn vowing of obedience to him; the spirit of all grace being above measure in our glorious Head, for our use and behoof: We are called to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*,—to be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; by whom strengthening, we can do all things. This furniture

* Rom. i. 16, 17. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Psal. cxix. 106. Isa. xl. 29, 31. xliv. 3, 4. Hos. xiv. 7. Jer. xxxii. 40. 1 Pet. i. 5. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

ture we have always in him, as our new Covenant-head; and always access to the benefit of it by faith: And as, without this faith, it is impossible to please God by any duty or service; so, by this faith, we are in case to please God,—to serve him spiritually and acceptably. There is no comparison between the furniture we once had in the first *Adam*, and this furniture we have in *Christ*; which is no less than all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, so as we also are *complete in him*.—And as for the great work of *covenanting* to serve and obey him, we may with humble confidence set about it in the faith of this new-covenant furniture we have in Jesus Christ;—saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only* *.

S T E P IV.

The Act for *renewing* our COVENANTS.

DURING the time that the Associate Presbytery had under consideration—an enlargement of their Testimony concerning the *Doctrine of Grace*; they were likewise considering upon a *renovation* of our *solemn Covenants*,—a paving the way for which, was the occasion and design of that enlargement. Accordingly, an overture of an act for this purpose was approved of by them—the same day on which they passed their act concerning the doctrine of grace; *October 21st 1742*. But, upon an occasion which will be explained under the next *Step*, and from a desire of proceeding with great deliberation in a matter of so much importance; the Presbytery then agreed that there should be access for all members, present or absent, to propose any difficulties they might have at next meeting. And the matter was left in this state, from one meeting to another; till the 23d day of *December 1743*: At which time, the said overture (having undergone fundry amendments and enlargements since the former approbation of it) was unanimously approved of and enacted

* *Psal.* lxxi. 16.—*Isa.* xlv. 3, 4, 5. 2 *Tim.* ii. 1. *Eph.* vi. 10.
Phil. iv. 13. *Isa.* xlv. 24. *Col.* ii. 9, 10. *John* i. 16. 2 *Cor.* xii. 9.
Psal. ii. 12, 13. *Levit.* xx. 7, 8.

enacted.—And it was soon afterwards published, along with the act concerning the doctrine of grace, under the following title, viz. [ACT of the Associate Presbytery, for RENEWING the NATIONAL COVENANT of Scotland and the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT of the three nations; in a way and manner agreeable to our present situation and circumstances in this period.]

The *Introduction* to this Act bears,—That, “agreeably
“to scripture-precepts and patterns, of perpetual obligati-
“on and use; the reformation of religion in Scotland
“hath, through the several periods thereof, been carried
“on in a way of covenanting:” and that “the Associate
“Presbytery being led out in the course of sovereign and
“holy providence, to essay the revival of reformation;
“have judged it their duty to essay, for this purpose, the
“revival of *covenanting*.”

The act begins with considering the state of the reformation from Popery, in this land: The covenanting-work of our reforming periods; conformable to scripture-prophecies and promises *: The public breaches of these solemn oaths and covenants: The perpetual and indispensable obligation thereof: The duty of a public confessing, acknowledging and avouching of the Lord to be our God,—required in the first commandment of the moral law, and enjoined with the greatest solemnity †; though but the smaller part of a people should be disposed to concur in such an important and solemn duty ‡: The frequent practice thereof by the church, as recorded in scripture; especially after gross backsliding and defection §: The promises of this taking place in New-Testament days §: And that the former practice of solemn covenanting in this church and land—has been found a special mean, through the Lord’s blessing, of a reviving unto them out of their bondage.

The Presbytery do then *call, obtest, and beseech* all sorts of persons in this land,—and more particularly all such

* *Isa.* xlii. 4. *Iv.* 5. *Micah* iv. 2. *Zech.* ii. 11. *Rev.* xi. 15.

† *Isa.* xlv. 23. ‡ *Isa.* xix. 18.

§ 2 *Chron.* xv. 10.—16. xxiii. 16. xxix. 10. xxxiv. 31.

2 *Cor.* viii. 5.

§ *Isa.* xlii. 3, 4, 5. *Zech.* xiii. 9. *Rom.* ix. 25. *Rev.* xi. 15.

such as have acceded to them ; to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, on account of our iniquities both personal and national : to flee by faith to the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, for the expiation and remission of them ; to turn from them unto the Lord,—and, with our hearts and souls, to renew our solemn vows and covenant-engagements unto the Most High God *.

They next take a view of the former method of renewing the *national Covenant* ; that it was done in a *Bond*,—accommodating the same to the circumstances of the church and land, at the several times of the renovation : And that the renewing of the *Solemn League and Covenant*—was with a *solemn acknowledgment* of the breaches thereof, and with an *engagement* to the duties contained therein ; agreeable to scripture-pattern and example [*Ezra ix. 10. Neh. ix. 10.*] ; where the church and people of God, after a particular acknowledgment of their own sins and the sins of their fathers, engaged themselves against the particular evils and sins that prevailed among them ; and to the duties incumbent upon them, in their situation and circumstances at that time.—After all this, the act proceeds in the following manner, *viz.*

THEREFORE, conform to the above scripture-examples, and agreeably to the above-mentioned laudable precedents in our own church and land ; this Presbytery agree and resolve that the NATIONAL COVENANT of Scotland, and the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT of the three nations, shall be renewed and sworn,—in a MANNER suitable to the present circumstances of this church and land ; by all such as shall willingly offer themselves unto the Lord, in this solemn work and duty. And for this end they appoint, that both covenants shall be renewed,—in a *solemn acknowledgment* of the public sins and breaches of the same ; and in a *solemn profession* of our faith, and *engagement* unto the duties contained in them : The tenor whereof follows, † *viz.*

The 7

* 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Jer. 1. 5.

† The last edition of the *acknowledgment* and *engagement*, in 1771,—beside many other escapes and inaccuracies, contains a variety of gross errors which marr the sense ; by misplacing, altering, changing, adding, and omitting words : But all these are carefully corrected here, according to the first edition. And some explanatory notes are added.

The ACKNOWLEDGMENT of SINS.

WE all and every one of us, seriously considering—the great goodness of God manifested towards this land, in bringing our fathers first out of *Pagan* darkness; and afterwards, when *Antichristian* idolatry and superstition had overspread the whole land, in making the light of the glorious gospel of Christ break forth with such remarkable purity and power, that the thick clouds of *Popish* darkness were scattered,—and the house of God was reared up among us, in a great measure of conformity to the pattern laid down in the Lord's word: As also, that all ranks of persons within this land did, by a national *confession*, oath and *covenant*, abjure particularly and expressly the errors and corruptions of Popery; and that, by the said oath and covenant, they did sundry times bind and oblige both themselves and their posterity to continue in the profession, faith and obedience of the true reformed religion,—as the same was held forth from the word of God, in our first *Confession of Faith* and *books of discipline*; and to defend the same, and resist all contrary errors and corruptions,—according to their vocation, all the days of their life: And likewise considering that all ranks of persons in the three kingdoms did, by a *solemn League and Covenant*, swear, each one of them for himself,—that they should sincerely, really and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour, in their several places and callings, the preseryation of the reformed religion in the Church of *Scotland*,—in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of *England*, and *Ireland*,—in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government,—according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches; and that they should endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms, to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, *Confession of Faith*, form of Church-government, directory for worship and catechising,—that they and their posterity after them might, as brethren, live in faith and love, and that the Lord might delight to dwell in the midst of us: As likewise, by the said covenant, every one bound and obliged themselves to personal reformation;

so that, in their several places and callings, they might endeavour national reformation : And, in pursuance of the above covenanted uniformity, the Assembly that met at *Westminster*, with commissioners from the Church of *Scotland*,—agreed upon a *Confession of Faith*, *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, the *Form of Presbyterial church-government* and of *Ordination of ministers*, with a *Directory for the public worship of God* ; all which were received and approved by the General Assemblies of this church, in the manner expressed in the several acts adopting the same ;—and they hold forth unto us, from the word of God, the same true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, order and government,—which had been, from our reformation from Popery, believed and practised in this church and land, and sworn to in our national covenant : And farther considering that all ranks of persons, both in former and present times, have treacherously departed from the Lord,—and have transgressed his laws, changed his ordinances, and broken his covenant ; and that, at this time, we are under many heavy spiritual plagues,—which are the ordinary forerunners of desolating strokes and judgments, both upon churches and nations :—

Therefore, being warranted by the word of God, and the example of the church and people of God in scripture ; and remembering the practice of our religious predecessors,—who have acknowledged before the Lord their departure from him (by unbelief, and manifold breaches of their solemn national engagements and covenants), and have engaged themselves to reformation ;—and perceiving that this duty, when gone about in the faith of God's promise, and in obedience to his command,—hath been attended with a reviving out of bondage, and with a blessing and success from heaven : WE DESIRE, in dependence upon the LORD JESUS, who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, to ACKNOWLEDGE ; and in the faith of his atoning blood, and in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus,—WE CONFESS AND ACKNOWLEDGE, as in his sight who is the searcher of hearts, our own transgressions and the transgressions of this church and land.

We

We with our FATHERS have sinned, we have done wickedly ; our kings, our princes, our nobles, our judges, our magistrates, our ministers, and people of all sorts. Though the Lord hath spoken long and clearly unto us in the word of the gospel, we have not hearkened to his voice ; though we have made some profession of Christ, yet we have not, as we ought, received him into our hearts,—nor walked worthy of him in our lives ; and in this particular instance we have, in a very eminent manner, transgressed the covenant of the Lord our God. Our own consciences within us, and the many spiritual judgments that we are under,—may convince us of our manifold, wilful, and renewed breaches of our solemn oaths and covenants.

Particularly, though the sinfulness of receiving into our bosom, and admitting into places of power and trust, such as were opposers of and enemies to a covenanted work of reformation,—was solemnly acknowledged in the year 1749, and reformation in this particular was sworn unto ; yet, in a short time thereafter, in consequence of the *Public Resolutions*, places of power and trust were filled with such : And they were suddenly received into full church-communion and fellowship. And our backslidings did increase from time to time, till that general apostasy and defection,—when Charles II being restored to the government, all the legal securities given to a covenanted reformation, betwixt the years 1638 and 1650, were pulled down ; all the several parliaments that met during this period, together with all their acts and proceedings in favours of reformation, were declared null and void : In like manner, the *presbyterial* order and government of the house of God, to the maintenance and preservation of which the whole land was solemnly sworn, was overthrown ; and *prelacy*, which had been abjured by our covenants, was set up in its place : And likewise that famous Assembly which met at Glasgow in the year 1638, was declared by the parliament to be an unlawful and seditious meeting ; and all that was done between the foresaid year and the year 1651, in prosecution of a covenanted reformation, was declared rebellious and treasonable ; and the *national covenant* as sworn in the year 1638, together with the *solemn*

lemn League and Covenant, were declared to be *unlawful oaths*, and not binding on the lands ; yea, such was the height of wickedness, that they were ignominiously burnt in some considerable places of the nation : As also, most sinful and wicked invasions were made upon the headship and sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ, the alone Head and King of his Church ; by several parliamentary acts and deeds, asserting the *king's supremacy* in all causes whatsoever,—and declaring that the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the church doth properly belong to the king, as an inherent right of the crown. And when prelacy was thus reared up, as the most part of the ministry made a sinful and shameful defection unto it ; so the bulk and body of the land, in contradiction to our solemn oaths and covenants, did submit unto the same. Likewise, in this day of apostasy and defection, such of the ministry as complied not with *prelacy* did, upon the privy council's proclamations, desert their *synodical* and *presbyterial* meetings ; whence no *judicial testimony* was lifted up against the course of defection : yea, the most part of them left their own flocks, which thereby became a prey to the grievous wolves that were afterwards thrust in upon them.

Moreover, during this period of heinous backsliding, many sinful *oaths*, *declarations* and *bonds*, were imposed ; and among others the oath of *Allegiance*, or rather *Supremacy*, with the *Instrument assertory* of the royal prerogative ; the *Declaration*, and that self-contradictory oath the *Test* : By which oaths and bonds, the usurped supremacy over the house of God was acknowledged and recognized,—and a covenanted reformation was renounced and abjured ; so that all ranks of persons in this land made themselves more and more vile, by the blackest perjury and the greatest apostasy from the Lord. And as if all this had not been enough, such as endeavoured to witness against that course of grievous backsliding, and who departed from evil,—became a prey to the greatest tyranny and cruelty ; even to imprisonment, banishment, spoiling of their goods and cruel tortures. Yea, the blood of the witnesses for a covenanted reformation was shed in our principal cities, under colour of law ; and likewise in the
high

high places of the fields, without any legal process against them: Therefore, in our skirts is to be found the blood of those that have suffered for the testimony of Jesus; which is crying to heaven for vengeance against us, to this very day.

Also, in consequence of the above-mentioned usurped supremacy over the kingdom of Christ, in the years 1669 and 1672 *Indulgences* to some Ministers who had not conformed to prelacy were granted; under certain conditions, limitations and restrictions: Wherefore, as these indulgences had their rise, subsistence and conveyance from the above wicked supremacy,—and as the accepters of them were limited and restricted in the exercise of their ministry; so the acceptance of them was a departure from the word of Christ's patience, which his servants and people in this land were called to hold fast,—especially in such a day of temptation and trial. Likewise, when the Duke of York, a *professed Papist*, was advanced to the throne, a boundless *Toleration* was granted by this Popish prince; which was plainly designed for the introduction of Popery and slavery,—being expressly conveyed from the king's absolute power, suspending and disabling all the penal statutes against Papists: and instead of a due testimony offered against the same, it was accepted by all the Ministers of the presbyterial denomination through the land, except a few only; with an address of thanks for the same by a considerable number of the said Ministers, in name of the rest.—Whereby we have been still further involved in the heinous guilt of departing more and more from the Lord.

As thus the beautiful order, the pure government and discipline of the House of the Lord,—was overturned, buried and forsaken; so that apostate prelatical Church (or party, and generally the whole land) did likewise reject Christ the chief Corner-stone, in the word of his grace and the purity of gospel-truth; for the maintaining of which this land was once so famous,—and whereby, at our Reformation, a nation was born at once, and a people brought forth as in one day: And instead of the purity of gospel-truth, there was a general apostasy to *Arminian* and other anti-evangelic errors, perverting the gospel of Christ.

Though

Though the Lord was graciously pleased, by a very glorious and surprising appearance for these lands in the latter end of the year 1688, to deliver us from the yoke of tyranny and arbitrary government under which we then groaned; yet we have never, to this day, rendered unto him according to the benefits which we have received from him. We did not understand his wonderful works, neither remembred the multitude of his mercies. We provoked him *at the sea, even at the Red Sea*; and instead of waiting for his counsel, we followed the counsels of flesh and blood. We turned not unto him with our whole hearts, but feignedly. And our backslidings have increased from time to time,—till our apostasy and defection, in the present age, is come to an height, as to some particular instances, which was not known in former times.

Though the Lord wrought a great salvation for us the foresaid year, yet we said not,—*Where is the Lord that brought us out of the land of Egypt?* We returned not unto the Lord, by a free and particular confession and acknowledgment of our above and many other steps of defection and backsliding from him; nor by the renovation of our solemn covenant-engagements to the Most High God.

When the Estates of the nation were met in a free Parliament in the year 1690, our *Presbyterial* Church-government was settled according to its civil establishment in the year 1592; and all the steps of reformation attained to in that covenanting period betwixt 1638 and 1650, were neglected and passed by: Yea, in the said settlement of Presbytery, all that was done against a covenanted work of reformation, in the first session of Parliament of King *Charles* after his Restoration, is left untouched; particularly the infamous *Act Rescissory*, whereby all the acts and deeds of the foresaid covenanting period were declared null and void, is never repealed: Also that impious and wicked act, the second act of the second session of the same Parliament, declaring null and void the proceedings of that faithful Assembly at *Glasgow* in the year 1638, and all other acts and deeds of that reforming period,—stands in the body of our Scots law to this very day. And thus that
great

great work, which the Lord wrought with an outstretched arm in the days of our fathers, lies still buried under the grave-stone of several parliamentary acts and deeds; which is an iniquity that testifies against us to this very day. Likewise by the same Parliament in the year 1690, instead of our covenant-allegiance, which was judged a proper badge of loyalty in our reforming periods,—a *general* oath of allegiance to the Sovereign was imposed.

And as, in the above and like instances, the Estates of the nation shewed no disposition to return unto the Lord; so, when the first General Assembly of this Church did meet, the same year 1690,—they did not, in their ecclesiastical capacity, faithfully and particularly represent unto all ranks of persons through the land, their manifold iniquities and backslidings,—in order to excite them to humiliation and mourning before the Lord: They sat down upon the above civil establishment, without remonstrating against what was defective in the same; or making any express and particular acknowledgment of the many heinous backslidings of the former period: They did not, by any formal act, condemn the sacrilegious usurpation of the royal dignity of Zion's King: Nor did they, by any express act, assert him to be what he is,—*The alone King and Head of his Church*; in opposition to the above-mentioned usurpation of his royal prerogative,—and the indignities done unto the same by the many wicked acts and laws that were made, and the sinful oaths that were imposed in that period: Neither did they assert the *Divine Right* of Presbytery,—nor the *intrinsic power* of the Church, with respect to the calling of her national Assemblies; which are two special branches of the Redeemer's glorious headship in and over his Church: Likewise, they did not expressly approve our covenanted-reformation, attained unto from the year 1638 to the year 1650; neither did they plainly justify the wrestlings, testimonies and sufferings of the Lord's remnant for the same, in the late persecuting times: Also they did not, by any particular act of Assembly, assert the *obligation of our Covenants*, national and solemn league; and their binding force upon posterity: Nor did they particularly condemn the above-mentioned sinful oaths, declarations and bonds; and many other steps of defection
from

from the Lord, during the foresaid period. And though the Lord, by his special and remarkable providence, brought the Ministers and Elders of this Church together again in a national Assembly: Yet, instead of censuring such as had made gross defection from the Lord, some were admitted into ministerial communion, and many into the office of Elders, and multitudes into full communion with the Church in her sealing ordinances,—who had taken the above-mentioned oaths and bonds, and who were deeply involved in the guilt of persecuting the Lord's people, and in the other defections of that period of apostasy; without requiring from them any evidence of their repentance and sorrow for the same.

Thus though the Lord did wonderfully deliver us, we rendered not unto him according to the mercies received; but mingled ourselves with our enemies, and have learned of them their ways: And they have been a dead weight upon the Lord's work and interest, ever since that time.

Our iniquities and backslidings have increased more and more: Particularly when, by the treaty of *Union* with *England* in the year 1707, we were incorporated with our neighbours in *England* upon terms opposite unto and inconsistent with our *Covenant-union* with them; in regard the maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies of the Church of *England* is made, by the said treaty, a fundamental and essential article of the Union of the two kingdoms: And thus, with our consent, the *Antichristian* hierarchy, and a superstitious worship in *England*, have all the security that human laws can give them; whereby this whole nation hath again not only given openly up with their solemn covenant-engagements to the Lord,—but also involved themselves in the guilt of consenting to, and thereby approving of the *Antichristian* hierarchy, and a superstitious worship in *England*.

Immediately after the foresaid incorporating Union, our land was made to groan under the load of *unnecessary swearing*, in the manifold repetition of oaths: And the nation was burdened with unlawful oaths; such as the oath of *Abjuration*, imposed upon all in civil and military trust,—and afterwards upon the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland*; which oath we acknowledge as one of our national

tional sins and steps of defection,—in so far as the united constitution, opposite unto our Covenant-union, is thereby homologated and approven. Likewise the *sacramental test* * is imposed upon the members of this Church, while serving the Sovereign in *England* and *Ireland*. Also a superstitious form of swearing is introduced amongst us, by *laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels*. Moreover the same oaths are frequently repeated upon the same day, to qualify men for different posts and offices; whereby the weight and impression of a solemn oath is ready to wear off the spirits of many. And, by all these sinful impositions and practices, our land is more and more involved in sin and guilt.

Further, a short time after the above incorporating Union, particularly in the year 1712, an almost boundless *Toleration* was granted; whereby a door was opened to gross corruption in principle, which always brings along with it looseness in practice: And in consequence of this toleration, the superstitious and corrupt worship of the Church of *England* is set up in all the corners of this land. Also, in the foresaid year, the right of *Presentation* to vacant churches, claimed by Patrons, was again restored unto them; and though patronage is contrary to our received and known principles,—yet countenance is given to this Antichristian usurpation, by the judicatories their intruding presentees upon reclaiming congregations. Likewise, the superstitious observation of *holy-days* is introduced amongst us; by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice in the latter end of *December*. By all which sinful courses and practices, our land is *defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant*.

As our provocations, in the above instances, are great; so they have increased, and are still more grievous,—through the deep wounds that have been given unto many precious and important truths, laid down from the word of God in our Confession of Faith. Particularly, it has been vented and taught among us,—That *nothing is to be*

VOL. I.

2 G

admitted

* See the Note upon the parallel place of the *Judicial Testimony*, P. 94.

admitted in religion but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so: That there are means appointed of God for obtaining saving grace; which means, when diligently used, with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being heard,—God hath promised to bless with success; and that the going about these means in the foresaid manner, is not above the reach of our natural powers and abilities: That were it not for the prospect of happiness, we could not, and therefore would not serve God: That by the light of nature, and works of creation and providence, including tradition; God hath given an obscure objective revelation unto all men, of his being reconcileable to sinners: That it is probable that none are excluded from the benefits of the remedy for sin provided by God, except those who, by their actual sins, exclude themselves; and slight or reject, either the clearer light of the gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church: As also, That there was not a proper covenant made with Adam, for himself and his posterity; and that Adam was not a federal head to his posterity.

Though the above gross and dangerous errors, whereby many important truths laid down from the word of God in our Confession of Faith are subverted, were all taught in one of our Universities; and though they were brought before the judicatories of this Church; and likewise, though the teacher of them owned and maintained them in his defences at their bar: Yet the General Assembly, in the year 1717, dismissed the process, without any censure inflicted upon the said teacher; yea, without any particular express Testimony against the above gross and dangerous errors. And so, as a righteous judgment upon this Church for neglecting to vindicate injured truth, and to censure the broacher of the above errors; the Lord permitted him to proceed from evil to worse, even the length of *impugning the Deity of the great God our Saviour*: As appears from the process against him in the years 1727 and 1728. For it was found evidently proven, by the Assemblies which met the said years,—That he had vented and taught, *That our Lord Jesus Christ is not necessarily existent: That the necessary existence of our Lord Jesus Christ is a thing we know not: That the Three Persons of the*

the

the Trinity are not to be said to be numerically one in substance or essence : As also, That the terms Necessary Existence, Supreme Deity, and the title of The only true God, —may be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son. By which propositions the Son of God our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier, have been robbed of their true deity ; and consequently of their essential glory.

Through the above-mentioned gross and dangerous propositions, this land has been the seat of pernicious errors ; and of grievous blasphemy against the Persons of the *adorable Trinity*. But though it is to be feared, that the seed of error which hath been thus sown amongst us has taken deep root, and is bringing forth corrupt and poisonous fruits : Yet, as the judicatories of this Church have never inflicted any censure upon the teacher of the above errors, adequate to the great scandal and offence he had given ; so they have not, to this very day, particularly and expressly condemned any of the above-mentioned errors, as contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confession of Faith,—nor have they asserted the truth, in opposition unto the terms in which it has been impugned and denied. And thus many important and precious truths have been left wounded and bleeding, without any suitable Testimony given unto them.

Likewise, several other gross and dangerous errors have been vented among us ; even such whereby the peculiar and supernatural operations of the *Holy Spirit* have been traduced, and spiritual exercise exposed and ridiculed : And such whereby the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, concerning the *person and mediation of Christ*, are wickedly subverted. And though several such errors have been brought to the bar of the present judicatories ; yet neither is the author thereof censured, nor is there any express judicial testimony given against them. Moreover, it has been publicly asserted and maintained by him,—That *the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest or pleasure ; whereby Self is exalted unto the throne of God. And yet the Assembly, in the year 1736, not only dismissed the publisher of this and several such gross errors without any censure inflicted upon him, or any condemnation*

demnation of his errors : But instead of this, the Assembly admitted his explication of the article concerning self-love, —namely, *That our delight in the honour and glory of God, is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions* ; whereby it appears, that the foresaid Assembly have adopted the above erroneous principle concerning self-love, as their own : In regard that the maintainer thereof does, by the above explication, still make *our delight* (and so our self-love, interest or pleasure) the *chief motive* of all virtuous and religious actions ; so that hereby the great idol *Self* is still exalted and placed in the throne of God,—and the declarative glory of God is still subordinated unto self, as our chief and highest end.

Our iniquities and backslidings have also increased by the conduct of the present judicatories, in their exercising a *lordly* power and authority over the heritage of God ; and by their gross perverting of the ordinance of discipline. Thus, violence has been done to the flock and heritage of God, by obtruding Ministers upon them in all corners of the land : And by exercising a *legislative* power and authority over the House of God, in making laws to his subjects contrary to his will declared in his word ; as was done by the General Assembly in the year 1732, in their act anent the settlement of vacant parishes. And though this act was repealed by the Assembly in the year 1734 ; yet it was not repealed on account of the sinfulness thereof, but only because it was enacted contrary to some ordinary forms. Accordingly, the contrariety of the said act to the word of God, and the laudable constitutions of this Church agreeable thereto,—has never been acknowledged : Yea, vacant congregations are, to this day, settled according to the manner prescribed in the said repealed act. Likewise, the ordinance of discipline has been perverted by the Assembly in the year 1733 ; in appointing their Commission to inflict censures upon some Ministers merely for protesting, for their own exoneration, against a sentence of the Assembly restraining ministerial freedom in testifying doctrinally against a course of defection,—in case the said Ministers should not retract their protestation. Moreover, by an act of the said Assembly concerning the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, such as cannot submit to the
[ministry

ministry of intruders are excommunicated from sealing ordinances; and Ministers are threatened with the highest censures of the Church, if they dispense sealing ordinances unto them: And yet the erroneous are dismissed from the bar of the judicatories, either without any censure at all, or with no due censure inflicted upon them.

Also, of late, *the Sabbath of the Lord has been publicly profaned*; by the most part of Ministers their reading the Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*: By which reading of that act, the alone *Headship* and Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus over the Church, his free and independent kingdom, was likewise practically *given up* *. And some of the judicatories having screened the readers of the said act, by their acts of forbearance; and none of the judicatories having censured any of them for this public scandal and offence: The whole lump of this established Church, thus leavened by suffering the leaven of this unpurged scandal to continue among them, may therefore justly be constructed to have *departed from their holding* of the King of Zion,—and to have subjected and subordinated their ecclesiastical meetings to the civil powers; whereby the Redeemer's Crown has been profaned, and cast down to the ground.

Though the judicatories of this national Church have been, for a considerable time, carrying on a course of defection; yet they are so far from acknowledging their iniquity, and returning to the Lord,—that they condemn a Testimony unto the truth: And they not only refuse to lift up a Judicial Testimony for truth themselves, but they persecute others who are endeavouring to do it. Particularly, the General Assembly that met in the year 1738—condemned in bulk the *Testimony* emitted by the Associate Presbytery, as casting many groundless and calumnious reflections upon the said judicatories; without condescending upon any one of these which they call groundless and calumnious reflections: Whereby, instead of confessing their guilt to the glory of God,—they justify themselves, and plead that they are innocent, and refuse that they have sinned. Farther, the said Assembly impowered their Commission to libel and cite the seceding Ministers before the ensuing Assembly. Likewise, the Assembly in the
year

* See the Note upon the parallel place of the *Declinature*, p. 168, &c.

year 1739 (even in the face of a public and open Testimony given by the Presbytery, in their Act and *Declinature* read in presence of the Assembly, against their course of defection and backsliding from the Lord; together with a solemn call given them, in the said Act and Declinature, to return to the Lord) did harden themselves yet more in their iniquity, by condemning this Testimony; as containing nothing but groundless prejudices against the present judicatories,—and most injurious, insolent and disrespectful expressions concerning the highest civil authority: Though the Declinature contains nothing with reference to civil authority, but a just and necessary Testimony against the above act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*. Moreover, they recommended it to the next Assembly—to inflict the censure of Deposition upon the seceding Ministers; and afterwards, that Assembly did pretend to do so: By which procedure they have heightened and aggravated their iniquity; in regard they have thereby materially sentenced all such Ministers to deposition, who shall duly testify against the present course of defection,—which, as matters stand, cannot be done in a way of communion with the present judicatories. And we desire to lament over it before the Lord, that the present judicatories have come to such a height of defection,—that they continue to refuse all calls which are given them to return to the Lord, from whom we have (every one of us) deeply revolted.

It is also to be lamented, that a *Flood of errors* hath broke in upon the land; whereby the Lord's name is dreadfully dishonoured, the doctrine of justification by grace is wofully corrupted, the proper imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for our justification before God is denied, the foundations of our holy religion overturned, thousands of precious souls destroyed, and wide steps made towards Popery and Paganism. More particularly, it is to be lamented,—that there is a dreadful prevalency of *Deism*; whereby all revealed religion is rejected, and the light of corrupt nature is exalted in its room: That the seed of *Ariniasm* is sown among us; whereby the true and supreme Deity of the Son of God, and of the Holy Ghost, is denied; and thus, the very foundation of
the

the Christian faith is unhinged : As also, that there is a general growth of *Arminianism* ;—whereby it is maintained, that God's act of election and reprobation depends on his foresight of the good or evil works of men ; that Jesus Christ, by his death, has merited grace to all mankind ; that notwithstanding of the fall, man retains a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good ; that the grace of God is not irresistible and efficacious of itself ; and that believers in Christ may fall totally and finally away from a state of grace. And it is farther to be lamented that, of late, some, who formerly distinguished themselves in zeal for our reformation and covenanted principles,—have turned aside to *Latitudinarian*, *Independent* and *sectarian* extremes ; whereby the unity of the true Catholic church is denied,—and the Presbyterial order and government, the only government which Christ hath instituted in his house, is subverted : As also, the warrantableness and great design of Confessions of Faith and Catechisms, as tests of soundness in the faith, is thereby overthrown ; and a wide door is opened unto a toleration of all heresy and error, under the old specious pretext of liberty of conscience. And for all these things the Lord may justly say of us,—*I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright ; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying what have I done ? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.*

Together with the above-mentioned steps of defection and backsliding, a flood of profaneness and wickedness overspreads the whole land. All ranks of persons have corrupted their ways ;—our nobility and gentry have, for the most part, burst the Lord's bands asunder and cast away his cords from them ; our ministers, burgesses, and commons of all sorts,—have turned away backward, and forsaken the Holy One of *Israel* : The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. Many heinous sins and provocations, against the first and second table of the law, are to be found amongst us : Such as gross ignorance of God, Atheism, Infidelity, profane mockings at the mysteries of religion ; the holy scriptures are burlesqued, Popish errors and delusions are spreading, and the idolatrous mass is openly frequented in many corners of the land ; the name of God is profaned by rash and ordinary swearing
in

in common conversation,—and by perjury and false swearing, especially in trade and commerce ; the Lord's day is many ways profaned, particularly by frequent and unnecessary journeying from place to place ; many are without natural affection, unruly, disobedient ; the land is also defiled with murders, drunkenness, prodigality and vanity in apparel, foolish jestings, rioting and wantonness,—yea, with open adulteries, and uncleanness of all sorts : And some profane and sinful customs, which have little obtained in former times, are countenanced and encouraged, both at court and in some eminent places of the nation ; such as the diversions of the stage, masquerades, balls, and other such seminaries of lewdness and lasciviousness. Likewise fraud and injustice, in dealings betwixt man and man, are to be found amongst us ; together with oppression, lying, envy, malice, evil-speaking, backbiting, falshood, dissimulation,—and covetousness which is idolatry. Likewise, of late, an idolatrous picture of our Lord Jesus was well received in some remarkable cities of the nation *. As also, the penal statutes against witches have been repealed by the parliament, contrary to the express law of God : for which a holy God may be provoked, in a way of righteous judgment, to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more ; and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others, to the same wicked and dangerous snare †.

The sins and provocations of this land are farther increased,—by the kind reception that many, both ministers and people, have given to Mr *George Whitefield* ; a professed member and priest of the superstitious church of *England* : And by the great entertainment that has been given to *Latitudinarian* tenets, as farther propagated by him and others ;—whereby any particular form of church-government is denied to be of divine institution ; and, under a pretence of Catholic love, a scheme is laid for uniting parties of all denominations in church-communion,—in a way destructive of any testimony for the declarative glory of *Immanuel* as Head and King of *Zion*, and for the covenanted reformation of this church and land : For which

* See the note upon the parallel place of the *Judicial Testimony*, p. 144.

† See the note at the foot of page 164.

which a righteous God hath justly *chosen their delusions*, and sent forth a spirit of delusion among them ; in the present awful work upon the bodies and spirits of men *. And though the Lord has been pleased, in his sovereign goodness, to preserve a remnant from being carried off by the above dangerous scheme and awful delusion ; yet, while endeavouring to testify against the same before the world, we have not been suitably exercised thereanent before the Lord.

VOL. I.

2 H

And

* This is the work which took place about *Cambuslang*, and other parts through the West of *Scotland*,—in the year 1742^d and a year or two afterwards ; in connexion with, and among the favourers of Mr *Whitfield's* ministrations.

“ The supposed converts” (as is elsewhere represented) “ were commonly all at once seized with dreadful horrors ; which cast them into long faintings and swoonings, or frightful agitations and convulsions : or made them screech and roar, so as utterly to drown the preacher’s voice ; that he could neither be heard by themselves nor others. This condition they continued in, some shorter and some longer : and then they were again all of a sudden ravished with joy ; transported (as they imagined) with the clearest manifestations of God’s love, and filled with the assurance of (what they took to be) their interest in Christ. And this faith of theirs was attended with, or built upon *imaginary Ideas of Christ* ; so as some of them even imagined themselves to see him : According to the imaginary doctrine they were instructed in ; the absurd doctrine of an *imaginary Idea of Christ as man being helpful to Faith*, preached and published upon this occasion.”

And, as was expressed in an act of the *Associate Presbytery* for a public Fast, (appointed *July 15th*, and observed *August 4th*, 1742) ; “ bitter outcries, faintings, severe bodily pains, convulsions, visions,—are the usual symptoms of a delusive spirit.—The promoters of this work are going on in the same course of defection as before.—The following fruits and effects of it are undeniably evident, *viz.* The warmest aversion from and opposition to a testimony for our covenanted reformation, for these same very principles which have been sworn to and suffered for unto blood in these lands,—as if it were nothing but *Bigotry and Party-zeal* ; and the closest conjunction with their ministers, though they are continuing to bear down these principles with a high Hand,—whether Intruders or not : Contrary to the practice of scripture converts, and the experience of the saints of God in this land ; who, upon their conversion, still espoused the testimony of their day,—and contended for the present truth.” And this was a principal source of that *Selfish Religion* which has prevailed ever since, among the more serious members of the Established Church ; in opposition to all testimony for the truths of God, and against the public sins of the time.

And we desire, through grace, to turn our eyes inward to our own hearts ; to search and try our ways, to declare our iniquity, to be sorry for our sin, and to turn again unto the Lord. For, *who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers ? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned ;* by our unbelief, selfishness, formality, earthliness and carnality, falling from first love, and security ; by want of tenderness, watchfulness and spirituality,—in our frame and disposition, and in our walk and conversation ?

And, in a particular manner, we desire to be humbled before the Lord for our contempt of the *glorious gospel* of the Son of God ; which we acknowledge to be our sin, as it is the great sin and chief guiltiness of the land wherein we live : That we have not suitably improved it, as it is the ministration of *righteousness* for our justification ; and as it is the ministration of the *Spirit* for our sanctification. We acknowledge that we are filthy and polluted ; and we have it to lament over, that, in a very great measure, we have not *obeyed the voice*,—we received not correction, we have not trusted in the Lord, we have not drawn near to our God : We have been obstinate, our neck has been an iron sinew and our brow brass ; we have dealt very treacherously, and have been transgressors from the womb. We confess our ignorance and great shortcoming in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord,—in his person, offices, blessings and benefits ; of the covenant of grace, as it stands fast with him ; and of the way of improving Christ, and the covenant of promise.

And we desire to be humbled for our undervaluing Christ, communion with him, and his spiritual graces and blessings : That we have preferred other things so much to Christ and his interest, and have not given him the pre-eminence above all : That we have been so little exercised in meditation, searching the scriptures, self-examination, and fervent wrestling with God by prayer ; these means of secret communion and fellowship with him : That we have come so far short in receiving Christ into our hearts ; and improving him, as held forth by the gospel, in his fullness of grace : And that we have been much estranged from the life of faith upon the Son of God ; for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We acknowledge

knowledge that we have gone about to establish our own righteousness ; and have not entirely rested upon *his righteousness* alone, as revealed to us in the gospel : Which appears, among many other things, in sinking fears, scarring to apply to Christ and the promises, and not rejoicing in Christ the propitiation,—with humility under a sense of wants, short-comings and failing in duties ; which, in effect, is a degree of establishing a righteousness of our own, and not submitting to the righteousness of God : And that we have performed duties more in a legal, than in an evangelical or gospel way and manner. And we desire to be humbled for our not making use of Christ, as we ought, for *sanctification* ; according to the promises of the covenant : As we have not acted in a way of dependence upon him, in all duties and ordinances,—and in all the performances of our common Christian calling, and of our particular lawful vocations ; for direction, quickening, and strength to mortify our corruptions,—and to carry us through our Christian course, against all discouragements and temptations.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not duly made use of Christ, in approaching to the throne of grace ; by *prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving* : That, in our approaches to God, we have not had the eye of faith duly fixed upon Christ, nor offered all our service through him as we ought ; and that we have not come with that humble boldness and full assurance of faith, unto God as a Father, wherewith the sacrifice and intercession of Christ have warranted us to come.

And we desire to be humbled, that we have not been duly exercised in sanctifying the *Lord's day* ; particularly in being careful enough to avoid carnal converse in coming to, going from, and during the intervals of public worship.

We desire to be humbled, that, in attending upon a *preached gospel*,—we have not had it more for our end to find communion with Christ, a taste of his goodness and excellency ; and to be built up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation : That we have not duly prepared our hearts before hand in secret, to come with godly fear and reverence, humility, spiritual hungering and
thirsting

thirsting after the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof ; and desiring, as new born babes, the sincere milk of the word, that we might grow thereby : That we have been so little acquainted with receiving the word, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God : That we have not employed the Lord more to teach us inwardly, by accompanying the outward means with the effectual operations of his holy Spirit : That we have not mixed the word preached with faith, as we ought to have done ; believing it with our hearts, and applying the truths preached to ourselves : And that we have not, as we ought, hid the words of Christ in our hearts, for after-improvement of them ; nor employed the Spirit of Christ to bring the word we have heard to our remembrance ; and have not taken due pains to meditate upon it in secret.

We desire to be humbled before the Lord, that we have not duly made use of the *sacraments*, as seals of the covenant of grace ; and of the promises there made to us in Christ. And particularly that, in offering our children to the Lord in baptism,—we have not fet ourselves, as we ought, to consider and prize the free love and grace of God ; which hath prevented us and our seed, in providing such a fountain for sin and uncleanness : That we have not been suitably exercised with our own and our children's defilement by original guilt and corruption ; nor have been duly concerned that they might be regenerated, united to Christ, and get an interest in the covenant of grace and promises thereof sealed up unto them ; That we have not suitably applied the covenant and promises of it to ourselves and to our seed ; and this sacrament as a seal thereof : That, at the administration of this sacrament to others, we have not been exercised as we ought ; by joining therein either for our own edification, or in holding up the baptized to God,—that he might bless his own ordinance to them, and receive them in amongst his children in Christ : That we have not made more conscience to make known to our children, when they came to years of capacity, their baptism,—the ends and use thereof, and the obligation thereby lying upon them, as consecrated to Christ : And that we have not duly made use of this sacrament,

ment, all along the course of our life, for taking hold of God's covenant; for furthering and strengthening the faith and comfort of our interest in God, as our God and Father in Christ,—and for strengthening through Christ, our resolutions and endeavours of mortification and newness of life.

And we desire to be humbled, that we have not been at more pains in preparation for partaking of the solemn ordinance of our *Lord's supper*,—by self-examination, meditation, prayer and supplication; and by renewed actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for righteousness and strength: That we have not approached his holy table with spiritual hunger and thirst after Christ crucified; and with humble, broken and contrite spirits, as we ought: That we have not duly exercised ourselves in remembering the Lord's death till he come again, and in applying the same to ourselves; for peace with God, for mortifying the body of sin, for working deep repentance and gospel sorrow on account thereof,—and for getting the love of Christ more kindled in our souls, and our hearts enlarged with greater thankfulness toward him who loved us and gave himself for us: That, through prevailing unbelief, we have too often been plunged into legal heaviness, even when partaking of this ordinance; whereas we ought especially to be rejoicing,—through faith on the propitiation in the death of Christ, so familiarly set forth thereby to us: And that after coming from the Lord's table, we have not walked more closely with God,—either in a suitableness to the great and high privileges and mercies bestowed upon us, or the deep and solemn engagements we have there come under;—but among other misimprovements of this ordinance, and departures from the Lord, we have too often given way,—either to unbelieving discouragements under the want of sensible enjoyments, or to carnal security after being privileged with sensible attainments; and have not otherwise walked before the Lord unto all well-pleasing.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not been suitably exercised with the scandals of others, who have been the objects of *Church-censures*: That we have not, upon such occasions, been suitably humbled for the fountain of
fin

sin in our own hearts ; that we have not mourned in secret places, for the dishonour done to God by these scandals ; and that we have not, as we ought, pitied and prayed for those who had fallen into the same.

And we desire to be humbled for our great *formality in prayer*, both in secret and in our families ; and that we have not made more conscience of joining with our spirits, in public *prayers* and *praises* : That we have employed the spirit of grace and supplication so little ; and have not duly improved this ordinance of prayer ; as a mean of communion with God,—and for strengthening our faith, and every other grace : And that, when we have directed our prayers to God, we have been so little employed in looking up after them for a gracious answer and return.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not walked as becometh the gospel of Christ ; but have failed and come far short in the duties we owe to God, to our neighbours, and ourselves. Particularly, we desire to be humbled for our vain thoughts, our idle words, and our overlinefs in divine worship : That our converse has favoured so much of the earth, and so little of heaven and things above : That we have not striven to keep the thoughts of the love of Christ, and of the free grace of God in him, upon our hearts, so fresh and constant as they should be ; in order to keep them watchful, tender,—zealous and enlarged for God, his honour and glory : That we have not observed and yielded unto the knockings of the Spirit ; whereby Christ has offered to come into our hearts, that he might sup with us and we with him : That we have often quenched the motions of the Holy Spirit, whereby he stirreth up to duties ; and stifled and put away his challenges, which tend to repentance and humiliation : That we have not been tender of his presence and consolations, to entertain the same ; but have grieved him by undervaluing and refusing them, and by our careless walking without attending on his direction and guiding. And we desire to be humbled for our untenderness, in not watching duly against carnal company and converse ; in not studying more to recommend religion to others,—by an holy, convincing and edifying conversation ; in not studying more faithfully to watch over and admonish one another, with meekness and love ;

love ; in being too ready to speak of one another's infirmities and failings behind their backs, instead of observing the scripture-rule [Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.] : And that we have not duly improved spiritual company, and spiritual exercise of social prayer and conference.

As all the above sins, defections and backslidings, are highly aggravated ; being committed against great gospel light,—and many remarkable appearances of God amongst us, both in a way of mercy and judgment, in former as well as in latter times ; and notwithstanding of a great profession on our part, our baptismal vows,—and our indispensable engagements, by the national Covenant of *Scotland* and the solemn League and Covenant of the three nations : So we desire to be deeply humbled before the Lord for the same ; to ly down in shame before him, confessing our iniquities,—that we with our fathers have sinned, and that we have done wickedly : And to acknowledge the Lord as righteous and holy, though he should cast us out of his sight ; and send in a sword amongst us, to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant. But since the Lord is yet waiting that he may be gracious, we desire to flee unto the blood of Jesus for the remission of our own sins ; and the sins of this whole covenanted Church and Land : And to pray that he may return unto us, and that he may heal our backslidings and breaches ; that glory may yet dwell in our land.

And in regard it is the duty of a sinning people, not only to confess and acknowledge their iniquities, and to be humbled for them ; but to take hold, by faith, of God's gracious covenant revealed to us in the glorious gospel ; avouching the Lord to be our God, according to the tenor of this his covenant,—and returning to the Lord our God, from whom we have fallen by our iniquities : And, in the faith of his free mercy through Jesus Christ, and confidence of that grace and strength promised in his covenant of mercy, to engage unto and pursue after reformation ; and the advancement of the interests of the mediatorial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is *in* but not *of* this world,—and *as* subservient to which, the kingdom of Providence is committed unto him :—And being convinced in
our

our minds, and confessing with our mouths, that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound as aforesaid, by the *national Covenant of Scotland* and the *Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations* ; firmly and constantly to adhere unto the doctrine, worship, presbyterial Church-government and discipline of the House of God,—laid down in his word, contained in our standards, and sworn to in these solemn Covenants :—

THEREFORE, in obedience to the command of God, conform to the practice of the godly in former times ; and according to the laudable example of our worthy and religious progenitors in the foresaid Covenants :

[The ENGAGEMENT unto DUTIES.]

WE *all and every one of us*, though sensible of the deceitfulness and unbelief of our own hearts, and however frequently perplexed with doubts and fears anent our actual believing ; yet desiring to essay, in the Lord's strength, and in obedience to his command, to glorify God,—by believing his word of grace contained in his covenant of promise ; and, in the faith of his promise, to devote ourselves unto the Lord in a Covenant of Duty : WE DO, with our hands lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD, hereby profess, and before God, angels and men, solemnly declare,—That, through the grace of God, and according to the measure of his grace given unto us, we do, with our whole hearts, take hold of the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the only propitiation for our sins ; his *Righteousness*, as the only foundation of our access to and acceptance with God ; his *Covenant* of free and rich promises, as our only charter for the heavenly inheritance ; his *Word*, for our perfect and only rule of faith
and

and practice ; his SPIRIT for our alone guide, to lead us unto all truth revealed in his holy word,—unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. We avouch the LORD to be OUR GOD. And, in the strength of his promised grace, we *promise* and *swear*, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD ; that we shall walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice : And particularly that we shall, by the Lord's grace, continue and abide in the profession, faith and obedience of the foresaid true reformed religion,—in doctrine, worship, Presbyterial Church-government and discipline ; and that we shall, according to our several stations, places and callings,—contend and testify against all contrary evils, errors and corruptions ;—particularly, *Popery, Prelacy, Deism, Arianism, Arminianism*, and every error subversive of the Doctrine of Grace ; as also, *Independency, Latitudinarian Tenets*, and the other evils named in the above confession of sins *.

In like manner we *promise* and *swear*, that, by all means which are lawful and warrantable for us, according to the word of God, the approved and received standards of this Church, and our known principles,—we shall, in our several stations and callings, endeavour the reformation

VOL. I.

2 I

mation

* This Reduplication imports a Testimony against *these evils*, already considered and confessed as *matters of fact* ; and so cannot import (the absurdity of) an ascertaining or swearing to the truth of the facts,—which is supposed as out of controversy, in the previous solemn exercise of confessing the same.

mation of religion in *England and Ireland*; in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the word of God : And to promote and advance our covenanted conjunction and uniformity in religion ; Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship,—as these were received by this Church.

And in regard we are taught by the word of God, and bound by our Covenants, national and solemn League,—to live together in the fear of God, and in love one to another, and to encourage one another in the work and cause of the Lord ; and that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world : Therefore, in a dependence on the Lord's grace and strength, we in the same manner do *promise and swear*,—That we shall, in our several places and callings, encourage and strengthen one another's hands in pursuing the end and design of this our solemn Oath and Covenant ; and that we shall endeavour a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ : And that, in our personal callings and particular families, we shall study to be good examples to one another of godliness and righteousness ; and of every duty that we owe to God and man : And that we shall not give up ourselves to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the cause of God ; but, denying ourselves and our own things, we shall, above all things, seek the honour of God and the good of his cause and people : And that, through grace, forsaking

forfaking the counfels of flefh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidences ; we fhall endeavour to depend upon the Lord, to walk by the rule of his word, and to hearken to his voice by his fervants. In all which, profefling our own weakness, we earneftly pray to God, who is the Father of mercies, through his Son Jesus Chrift,—to be merciful unto us ; and to enable us by the power of his HOLY SPIRIT, that we may do our duty, unto the praife of his grace in the Churches.

Amen.

+++++

THE Associate Prefbytery having paffed their *Act for renewing our Covenants*, at their meeting in *Stirling* on the 23d day of *December* 1743 ; they continued their faid meeting till the enfuing week : And on the 28th day of that month, which was obferved as a day of public fafting ; all the Minifters then prefent did join in the *Acknowledgment of Sins*, and with uplifted hands in the *Engagement to Duties*,—before a numerous congregation *. At the fame time, and in prefence of the congregation, they *fubfcribed* the *Engagement or Bond* ; as follows, *viz.* “ We under-fubfcribing Minifters, members of the Associate Prefbytery, do fubfcribe the above *Bond* with our hands ; at *Stirling*, this twentieth-and-eighth day of *December*, One thoufand feven hundred and forty-three years : The faid *Bond* having been this day firft folemnly *fworn* by us.”

“ EBENEZER ERSKINE, Minifter at *Stirling*.

“ RALPH ERSKINE, Minifter at *Dunfermline*.

“ JAMES THOMSON, Minifter at *Burntisland*.

“ ALEXR. MONCRIEFF, Minifter at *Abernethy*.

“ THOMAS

* Previous to this, they joined in [A *Confeflion* of the *Sins* of the *Miniftry*, with an answerable profefion of *faith* and engagement to *duties* ; to be entered into by Minifters, before their renewing the *Covenants*] : Which was published along with their *Act* for that *Renovation*.

- “ THOMAS MAIR, Minister at Orwel.
- “ JA. FISHER, Minister at Glasgow.
- “ DAVID SMYTON, Minister at Kilmaurs.
- “ WM. HUTTON, Minister at Stow.
- “ ADAM GIB, Minister at Edinburgh.
- “ AND. CLARKSON, Minister at Craigmalen.
- “ JOHN CLELAND, Minister at Balfroun.
- “ GEORGE BROWN, Minister at Perth.
- “ WILLIAM CAMPBELL, Minister at Ceres.
- “ THOMAS BALLANTYNE, Minister at Sanquhar.
- “ DAVID HORN, Minister at Cambusnethan.”

Four Ministers who were not then present, and another who was not then ordained,—did join, after the same manner, in that solemn work ; at *Falkirk*, on the 14th day of *March* ensuing : And subscribed as follows, viz.

- “ JAMES MAIR, Minister at Linton.
- “ PATRICK MATTHEW, Minister at Midholm.
- “ JAMES SCOT, Minister at Gateshall.
- “ JOHN WHYT, Minister at Dunse.
- “ HENRY ERSKINE, Minister at Falkirk *.

By an Act at *Edinburgh*, on the 14th day of *February* 1744,—the Presbytery did “ agree, resolve and determine ;
 “ That the *renovation* of the national Covenant of *Scotland*
 “ and the solemn League and Covenant of the three na-
 “ tions, in the *manner* now agreed upon and proposed by
 “ the Presbytery,—shall be the term of ministerial com-
 “ munion with this Presbytery : And likewise of *Christian*
 “ communion, in the admission of people to sealing ordi-
 “ nances ; secluding therefrom all *opposers*, *contemners* and
 “ *slighters* of the said renovation of our Covenants. And
 “ moreover, as the Presbytery judge that much tender-
 “ ness and lenity is to be used with the weakest of Christ’s
 “ flock,—who are lying open to light, and minding to
 “ come forward in the said cause ; that they may not be,
 “ at first instance, secluded from sealing ordinances : So
 “ they agree that all such are to be secluded who, after
 “ deliberate

* The last of these five subscribers—was ordained the day before. All who have been ordained since that time, had previously joined in covenanting-work.

“ deliberate pains taken for their information, with all
 “ due meekness and patience,—shall be found; by the Self-
 “ sion or superior judicatories they are in subjection unto,
 “ to be *neglecters* and *shiflers* of this important moral
 “ duty; or *not to be*, themselves, in the due use of means,—
 “ for light and satisfaction thereanent *.

This determination the Presbytery judge “ agreeable to
 “ the word of God; the principles of this Church, and
 “ the duty of the Lord’s remnant in these lands :” As a
 proper stand against “ the grievous and growing course of
 “ defection, by the present generation in these lands,—
 “ from the truths, cause and institutions of Christ,—re-
 “ vealed in his holy word, and maintained in our Refor-
 “ mation-standards; as also the dreadful prevalence of
 “ *Latitudinarian* principles, for uniting persons of all de-
 “ nominations in Church-communion,—to the overthrow
 “ of the government of Christ’s House, and the manifest
 “ prejudice of all his precious truths.—And (as is else-
 where expressed) “ it is in reality a proper and stedfast
 “ adherence to the unerring rule of faith and manners, in
 “ opposition to the various deviations therefrom in our
 “ day,—that is, by the said act, made *the term* of com-
 “ munion; and consequently no other term of communion
 “ is thereby imposed, than what the alone Lord of the
 “ Conscience has prescribed: While the proposed renova-
 “ tion of our solemn Covenants is not to be considered as
 “ *one particular duty*—made *the term* of communion, ex-
 “ clusively of or preferably to others; but as the *general*
 “ and *seasonable* form of avouching *all the principles and*
 “ *duties* of our holy profession.”

By another *Act*, passed next day, [anent the *Order* to
 be observed in renewing the Covenants], the Presbytery
 appointed as follows, *viz.* “ That the *Solemn Acknowledg-*
 “ *ment* of the public sins and breaches of our Covenants—
 “ shall be publicly *joined in and made*; whereupon these
 “ Covenants

* So far as the Writer of this account knows or can remember, there
 has been no instance (now after the course of about thirty years) of any
 of the people being kept back from sealing ordinances,—for not joining
 in covenanting-work; while none of them have been found as is above
 expressed: But they have always been waited for, till *willingly offering*
themselves; upon occasions of that solemn work, in their several congre-
 gations.

“Covenants shall be publicly *sworn and subscribed*, in the
 “BOND ;—by all such (in settled and vacant congregations *) as shall *willingly offer themselves* unto the
 “Lord, in this solemn work and duty :” And “that none
 “shall be admitted to swear or subscribe the Covenants,
 “but such as have a competent measure of knowledge,—
 “are free of all known scandal, and have a conversation
 “becoming the gospel ; as these only can make a credible
 “profession of willingly offering themselves unto the Lord,
 “in this work.”

P. S. Covenanting-work was accordingly gone about in two congregations (of *Abernethy* and *Ceres*), the ensuing summer. But the question which occurred soon afterwards, about the *religious clause* of some Burgeses-oaths,—put a stop to further progress of that work, (except at *Dunfermline* in summer 1746) ; till some time after the *Breach* of the Associate Synod, in the year 1747. The solemn work was then carried forward, in the several congregations of those Ministers who held fast their profession at the said breach ; as also in many other congregations, which have since come gradually to be settled : And the work has been several times gone about, in the generality of settled congregations,—in some, six or seven times ; not repeatedly by the same persons, but by new persons who offered themselves upon repeated occasions.

That solemn work has thus taken place, according to the substance,—but with variations, as to the circumstances of the *order* proposed in the *aforesaid Act* : And after the manner which is represented in the following particulars, *viz.*

1st, As Covenanting-work is always gone about on days of solemn fasting and humiliation ; so it is, commonly, on the fast-days before sacramental occasions : All who join in it being to communicate on the ensuing Sabbath ; and, in some places, each receiving a token immediately upon their subscribing the Bond.

2^{dly}, Public intimation is made of the solemn work proposed, a considerable time (four, five, or six Sabbaths) before

* So far as the Writer of this account knows or can remember, there has been but *one* instance (at *Jedburgh*) of going about this work in a vacant congregation.

before hand : And various meetings of Session are held in the mean time,—for conversing with and receiving such as offer themselves to join.

3dly. On the day appointed, the Minister of the place is assisted,—commonly by two or more of his brethren ; and then the work proceeds in the following manner, viz.

1. After praise and prayer, a sermon is preached,—commonly by the Minister of the place ; followed with prayer and praise.

2. The Minister of the place then takes notice of the solemn work to be proceeded unto ; and, after prayer, he reads out the names of those who are to join,—all of them being properly seated together.

3. The *National Covenant* is first read *, and then the *Solemn League and Covenant* ; commonly by the Minister of the place.

4. The assisting Ministers then read *the Acknowledgment of Sins*, (as also the *Engagement to Duties*, as preparatory to the engaging in it) ; and that in several divisions (into four, five, or six parts), by turns : Each commonly beginning with a short prayer.

5. There is next a prayer of solemn Confession and Supplication, commonly by the Minister of the place ; followed with praise.

6. The oath of the *Bond* is then administered, by the Minister of the place ; all the people who join standing up, and holding up their right-hands,—upon a sign given, by the Minister's lifting up his right-hand, at the words of the Bond which import so much : And he concludes this part of the work, by an exhortation to the Covenanters,—followed with prayer and praise †.

7. The subscribing of the Bond is hereupon proceeded unto ‡, (such as cannot write taking the pen into their hands,

* This is meant of the *National Covenant* as it was entred into in the years 1580 and 1581, without the *Bond* wherein it was renewed in the year 1638 ; agreeably to the example of our Reformers then, who renewed it in a new Bond suited to their circumstances.

† In some places, after administering the Bond,—all present who had formerly joined in it, and are to be admitted to the Lord's Table on the following Sabbath, do (on being called to do so) testify their adherence by lifting up their right-hands.

‡ Sometimes, from the numerosness of those who join, the subscribing has been after a sermon on the following day. The subscriptions are attested

hands, and giving it to the Clerk to subscribe for them); with turns of exhortation and praise, in the time of subscribing: All which is followed with prayer and praise. And the work of the day is concluded with a sermon: After some interval, where there is time for it; as in the entry of the work.

N. B. Women, as well as men are admitted to swear and subscribe the *Bond*. And this is conformable to scripture-example, in the 10th chapter of *Nehemiah*; as is fully made out by the eminent Mr *Boston*, in his very valuable *Traclatus Stigmologicus*.—According to the last verse of the preceding chapter, the *Covenant* there mentioned was *one*; but one, as to the matter and form of it: Yet, according to the 1st verse of this chapter, (as on the margin, and more clearly in the original), there were *sealings*,—a number of sealed deeds or copies of that same covenant; answerable to the case of the great multitude, who had to seal or subscribe the same. In the first 27 verses, there is a particular roll of many chief persons in the multitude,—who sealed or subscribed: And, according to the 28th verse, this was with the concurrence of *the rest of the people*,—particularly *their wives, their sons and their daughters*; every one having knowledge, and having understanding. Of these it is said, in the 29th verse, that *they clave to their brethren* who had subscribed: Not merely by a general declaration of adherence; but by entering into the Oath, and sealing or subscribing the same along with them. For the words which are rendered *they clave to their brethren*, do properly and literally signify,—*they apprehended or took hold; over, or after their brethren*. These words, as it were, *paint out* the case of that company, male and female; as they were crouding in upon their brethren of a public character who had sealed,—to take hold of the copies after them, and to seal or subscribe in the same manner.

STEP

attested by the Minister of the place; with concurrence of the Session-clerk, or some of his brethren then present.

S T E P V.

The ANSWERS to Mr Nairn, with the DECLARATION and DEFENCE subjoined.

THOUGH the *Step* now under consideration—was taken about three months before the final passing of the *Act for renewing our Covenants*: Yet having been taken about eleven months after the first passing thereof,—and having been also wholly occasioned by, and consequential upon that Step; it therefore comes properly to be considered in the last place.

The first passing of the *Act for renewing our Covenants*, was by the unanimous vote of all present excepting Mr Nairn. What he demurred upon was a *paragraph* in the *Acknowledgment of Sins*,—confessing the evil of the *Anti-government scheme* which some, formerly in accession to the Presbytery, had espoused; of the tenor following, *viz.*
 [“ As we desire to be humbled before the Lord for the
 “ national apostasy, under which the Lord’s remnant
 “ through the land have been groaning; while our rulers
 “ have not only neglected but contradicted their duty,
 “ of espousing and supporting the covenanted principles
 “ and reformation of this church,—whereby they have
 “ greatly provoked the Lord to anger: So we desire to
 “ be humbled for the dangerous extreme that some have
 “ gone into, of impugning the present civil authority over
 “ these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands,
 “ on account of the want of those qualifications
 “ which Magistrates ought to have, according to the word
 “ of God and our Covenants; even though they allow
 “ us in the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly
 “ unhinging the liberties of the kingdom;—an
 “ opinion and practice contrary to the plain tenor of scripture,
 “ and to the known principles of this church in her
 “ confession and covenants,—and of all other reformed
 “ churches: And that some few carry their zeal against
 “ the defections and evils of the times, to the dangerous
 “ extreme of espousing principles in favours of propagating
 “ religion by offensive arms; quite contrary to that
 “ disposition which ought to be in all the professed fol-
 “ lowers

"lowers of Christ,—who came not to *destroy men's lives*,
 "but to *save them*."]]

At the next meeting of Presbytery, Mr Nairn gave in a paper of *dissent* from the above *paragraph* : And when they were again met, he dictated a *representation* and *petition* upon the subject to their Clerk ; after which (at the next sederunt) he gave in a paper of *dissent* and *secession* from them. — At this meeting, and previous to the steps then taken by him, the Presbytery agreed to leave out that *paragraph* ; translating it into a separate *Act*, by which they *condemned the dangerous extremes* therein mentioned. And the reason of their so leaving it out was,—
 "in regard they had formerly agreed, That it was not
 "suitable to their present circumstances, to blend *civil*
 "and *ecclesiastic* matters in the oath of God in renewing
 "the covenants ; because that the cognizance of civil af-
 "fairs belongs not properly to them as a church-judica-
 "tory : And *some* members being of the mind, That the
 "reduplication of the oath upon that clause of the con-
 "fession of sins, which was the occasion of the *dissent*,—
 "would, upon the matter, account to the foresaid blen-
 "ding *."

A committee of the Presbytery having prepared a draught of *answers* to Mr Nairn, and of the *declaration* and *defence* subjoined ; and these *answers* having been considered at some precedent meetings : The Presbytery spent a meeting of three weeks at *Stirling*, upon the *declaration* and *defence* ; beginning on the 14th and ending on the 29th of *September* 1743. The draught was then *approved* of by a vote : And, according to their appointment, it was soon after published ; under the following title, *viz.*

[ANSWERS

* Two Ministers of the Presbytery (different from Mr Nairn) were of this mind. But the Presbytery did not judge, that there could be any such blending of civil and ecclesiastic matters by the foresaid reduplication ; where the Magistrate was not a party engaged unto : While all our duty toward the civil government, according to our professed principles, must be understood as comprehended among the other duties of the moral law,—even where God only is the party engaged unto, as in the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants. — A formal clause of *allegiance* in the *Bond*, would indeed amount to that blending of civil and ecclesiastic matters which is mentioned. For such a clause in the nature of the thing, could not but respect the Magistrate as a party engaged unto.

[ANSWERS by the *Associate Presbytery*,—to *Reasons of Dissent* given in to the said Presbytery, at *Stirling*, December 23d 1742 ; as also the *Representation and Petition* dictated to their Clerk, and *Reasons of Dissent and Secession* given in to them,—at *Edinburgh*, Feb. 3d 1743 ;—by the Reverend Mr *Thomas Nairn*, Minister of the Gospel at *Abbotsball* : Together with a DECLARATION and DEFENCE of the *Associate Presbytery's* Principles, anent the present *civil government*]. And the substance of the whole comes now to be represented.

It is reducible to two general heads, upon which Mr *Nairn's* quarrel with the Presbytery was chiefly stated ; their *manner* of Renewing our Covenants, and their *principles* about the present civil government : Which are to be distinctly represented.

HEAD I. *Concerning the Presbytery's Manner of Renewing our Covenants.*

I. MR *Nairn* alledges,—that the *form* and *manner* which the Presbytery proposes is *not*, and *cannot* in any sense be called a *renewing* of the Covenants ; but really a taking a *quite different* Oath or Covenant, under pretence of renewing the old Covenants. If this were true, he would indeed have good ground to differ from the Presbytery ; and he might well charge them with great *abuse* and *imposition* upon the people. But then, what reason doth he produce for that allegiance ? It just comes to this, That the Presbytery are for using a *new form* ; they are not for confining themselves to a repetition of the form, or of the same words and phrase wherein the Covenants were conceived by our ancestors : Thus, the difference which he complains of betwixt the form and manner proposed by the Presbytery, and our former Covenants,—is such as appears in the *reading* and *comparing* of them ; that is, a difference in form, or in words and phrase. The use of the *same* form, or of the same words and phrase, is that only which Mr *Nairn* (if his language here has any sense) admits to be a *renewing* of our Covenants. This is what he insists for ; and the doing otherwise is that for which he so heavily blames the Presbytery.

Now,

Now, in answer unto all this, the Presbytery proposes to manifest these five things following: (1.) That the method of renewing the Covenants which Mr Nairn insists for, against the Presbytery, is very *unreasonable*. (2.) That it is quite *absurd* and *impracticable*. (3.) That therein Mr Nairn is *inconsistent* with himself. (4.) That it is quite *unprecedented* in the Church. (5.) That the form and manner proposed by the Presbytery—is *really* a renewing our solemn Covenants, according to the example of our reformers. And if these things be once made out, the Presbytery will be sufficiently vindicated against all the noise Mr Nairn makes about their pretended abuse and imposition upon people.—It is proposed then to manifest,

1st, That the method of renewing the Covenants, which Mr Nairn insists for against the Presbytery, is very *unreasonable*. And this it is upon the accounts following, *viz.*

1. That we should be obliged and confined unto a repetition of the *same* form or *words* wherewith our Covenants were conceived in the last century, would necessarily require and suppose one of two things: Either,

(1.) That these *words* (abstracting from the meaning and matter) have a stamp of *divine authority* upon them: But this belongs only unto the words of the *Holy Ghost* in the Scriptures. Yea, the adherence which Mr Nairn pleads for, unto the words of our Covenants,—is greater than the adherence that God requires of us, unto the original inspired language of Scripture; for we are warranted to have the Scriptures translated into our own language, which is an accommodation of them to the circumstances of such as are ignorant of the original languages: And if, in retaining the meaning, matter and truths of Scripture, we may clothe the same in new words that will suit our circumstances; How *unreasonable* must it be to restrain us from using a necessary freedom with the form or words of our Covenants, for accommodating them to our present circumstances?

But, on the other hand,

(2.) Our confinement unto a repetition of the words wherein our Covenants were formerly conceived, would suppose that our first covenanters swore an adherence,—

not

not only unto the *things* and *duties* expressed in our Covenants, but also unto their *own words* wherein they expressed them: So as the oath, which we ly under in their loins, should bind us now unto the *words* as much as unto the *matter*; or to reckon the words of that oath part of the matter of it, whereunto we are sworn. But what can appear more ridiculous and false, than a supposition of this kind? Yea, as that oath did not bind posterity unto the *duties* therein mentioned, any *other* way than what might suit the circumstances God should place them in; How then could an adherence unto the *words* of that oath be any farther requisite?—But

2. That we should be confined unto a repetition of these words, in renewing the Covenants, is most *unreasonable*. Because, thus, our reformers were at liberty to enter into covenant with God in a way suited unto their circumstances, and the then special calls of God's word and providence. But we must be denied a like liberty: That is, in covenanting with God, we must overlook our present circumstances, and the present special calls of God's word and providence; and regard only what was the case an hundred years ago,—in repeating still that form of a covenant which did quadrate unto *that* case, but does not quadrate unto *ours*. Again, is the accommodating the Covenants to our case a thing that our reformers could do for us, and save us the trouble of; though they were ignorant of our case? Or could what they did supersede and annul our duty to deal with God in a covenant-way, suited unto God's present calls and manner of dealing with us? Is not then what Mr *Nairn* insists for most *unreasonable*? Moreover,

2dly, It is quite *absurd* and *impracticable*.

Here several expressions in our Covenants might be mentioned, which can noway hit our present condition; and an application of which unto the same would be very absurd: But, passing these, as obvious unto an intelligent reader; it is to be farther remarked, that,

1. The repetition insisted for is quite *absurd*: Because it must, upon the matter, say,—That our reformers did, of purpose, calculate the form of their Covenant, not only for the special circumstances and calls by word and providence

dence which then took place, but also for these that should take place even an hundred years after; though yet our reformers neither foresaw our present condition,—nor could they, or were they bound to make provision for it.

2. A renewing covenant, by repeating the ancient form, as Mr *Nairn* would have it,—is quite *impracticable*. For though we should pronounce the same form and words, yet we behoved necessarily to understand it of the present time, persons and things; otherwise it could not be a present oath. But though we should retain the words,—if we mean them not of the time, persons and things, that our forefathers had ado with; but of these which we have ado with; then, in so far, we pronounce the words with a different meaning from what our forefathers had: And so this could not be a renewing of the Covenants in Mr *Nairn's* strict sense; unless he wants a renovation of words, not of their meaning. Again,

3dly, In what Mr *Nairn* now insists for, he is *inconsistent* with himself. For, as his present language has no sense, unless he be pleading for a renewing the Covenants in a repetition of the ancient form and words; yet he wants the Covenants to be renewed in a way *sui*ted to our *circumstances*: And how can these things consist?—Moreover, that accommodation of the Covenants to our present circumstances which he pleads for, must be in one or both of these two ways. Either,

1. The same words must be used; but understood of the present time, persons and things: And then, the words are used with another special view than what our forefathers had. But is it not fully as lawful to make use of other words than they, as to use their words with another special view than they had? Again, seeing we must have a special view to the present time, persons and things,—Is it not far better to express the same in our own words, than to go back an hundred years and seek words for it from our forefathers; who could not foresee the same, and who were not bound to suit the Covenants unto our case but unto their own? Thus, if Mr *Nairn* once loose a pin of his scheme, by allowing us to have our own views according to our present circumstances; by a parity of

of reason, we cannot be hindered from having our own words also. But,

2. By accommodating the Covenants to our present circumstances, Mr *Nairn* may also mean a doing it "with an exception of some particulars, where there must be an alteration of the phrase." And this is what he positively advances in his Petition. There he proposes an example of the exception and alteration he is for, viz. as in the renovation of the Covenants at *Auchinshaugh* near *Douglas*, July 24th 1712. In the printed copy of the Covenants as there renewed, there are some alterations signified upon the margin; and particularly, these places that respect the Civil Magistrate—are explained away from any Magistrate that *actually* is, and applied to a Magistrate that (perhaps only) *may be* some time or other. It is not the Presbytery's business here, to give a judgment anent the manner wherein the Covenants were then renewed; nor particularly, anent the suitableness of calling the Great GOD solemnly to witness the fidelity of a people unto a Magistrate that had no being in the world.—But what must be farther noticed here, is this; That in accommodating the Covenants to our circumstances, Mr *Nairn* is for allowing *some exception and alteration of the phrase*. Now here he has fairly broke the ice: For it is a known maxim, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*; degrees of a thing alter not the nature of it. And thus it is the same thing, as to the general nature of it, which both he and the Presbytery here plead for, viz. the renewing of the Covenants with alterations suited to our circumstances; only he is for one manner and degree of alteration, and the Presbytery for another: And how comes he to have a right of prescribing so many alterations as he thinks fit; and of crying out, at the same time, against the Presbytery, if they offer to use any freedom of this kind? If Mr *Nairn* acted *consistently* with himself, in his present plea against the Presbytery's accommodation of the Covenants to our circumstances, as if this were no renewing of them at all; then he should have refused all manner of alteration: But, while he doth not so,—the only question here then is,—Whether he or the Presbytery shall determine the manner and degree of alteration that must be made?

4thly,

4thly, What Mr *Nairn* presently insists for, is altogether *unprecedented* in the Church.

For manifesting this it may be proper, in the first place, to take a view of the practice of the Church of *Israel* in making and renewing covenants. We have several instances of covenants of duties betwixt God and that people, viz. at *Horeb*, [*Exod.* chap. xix.]; in the land of *Moab*, [*Deut.* chap. xxix.]; in the days of *Asa*, [*2 Chron.* chap. xv.]; in the days of *Jehoiada*, [chap. xxiii.]; in the days of *Hezekiah*, [chap. xxix.]; in the days of *Josiah*, [chap. xxxiv.]. In the days of *Ezra*, [*Ezr.* chap. x.]; and in the days of *Nehemiah*, [*Neb.* chap. ix. and x.]. Now, we find not any one instance that *Israel*, in renewing covenant, did, at any time, repeat the form and words of a former covenant; yea, 'tis plain they never did: Though we have instances of their acknowledging and mourning over the breach of former covenants. Yet will Mr *Nairn* venture to say, That *Israel* never renewed their covenants; or, That, when they entered of new into a covenant,—they thereby did bury, sopite and destroy former covenants? This indeed is the native consequence of Mr *Nairn's* scheme.—

But, again, let the practice of the reformed Church of *Scotland* be considered; and it will appear that what Mr *Nairn* insists for, is altogether *unprecedented* therein.

In the years 1580 and 1581, the Confession of Faith, or *National Covenant*, was first sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks. This Covenant was renewed in the year 1590: And though then nine years only had elapsed after the first swearing of that Covenant; yet, for accommodating the same to their circumstances at that time, a general *Bond* was added thereunto,—containing a distinct oath, as to the form and words of it.

Afterwards, in the year 1638, when our reformers renewed the *National Covenant*; they saw meet to lay aside the general *Bond* added thereto, and which had been nationally sworn and subscribed *anno* 1590: And they framed and added a new *Bond* or *Oath*, different in form and words from any former. (Which new *Bond*, as the *National Covenant* is printed along with our Confession of Faith, begins in the second paragraph after the *specification* of
of

of Acts of Parliament; which acts *themselves* were however no part of the preamble to the new Bond, far less any part of that oath itself). And the said Bond, as having the forefaid national Covenant prefixed to it,—was sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks in the year 1638, and afterwards. Thus, the national Covenant, as first framed and sworn *anno* 1580, was not separately subscribed *anno* 1638; but as prefixed unto the forefaid new Bond. And why our reformers did not then also prefix the Bond that had been sworn and subscribed *anno* 1590,—there is one reason declared in a *Protestation* that was read and taken at the Cross of *Edinburgh* by our covenanters, *September* 22d 1638. And it is thus expressed in the 13th Reason of the *Protestation*, *viz.* “The general Bond—“ containeth many clauses not so *fitting* the *present* time “ as *that* wherein it was subscribed.” But the *National Covenant*, or Confession of Faith, did very well fit that time; wherein such methods were on foot for the introduction of Popery: Though the circumstances of that time did require the new Bond also to be added.

But it is farther to be observed here,—that the *National Covenant*, as it had been sworn *annis* 1580 and 1590, was *no part* of the oath which was sworn *anno* 1638; it was only part of the preamble unto that oath. And,

1. This is evident from the Covenant itself. For, besides that the *new Bond* is in itself a complete oath, not part of an oath: It is to be farther observed, that, in that part of the preamble which immediately proceeds the new Bond,—the foregoing National Covenant, or Confession of Faith, is called the *Confession of Faith above-written*; not above sworn, or above subscribed. Again, in the close of the preamble, they call it *the forefaid National Oath and Subscription*; which the *present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep inviolable*: And thus they speak of it as an oath that before had been nationally sworn and subscribed, so as it still continued binding. And they speak of the then present and succeeding generations as bound thereby in the same manner; that is, that they were both bound by it as a Covenant formerly sworn and subscribed, and which was now brought into the preamble of the new Bond. Again,

2. Our reformers considered and spoke of this *new Bond*, as a covenant distinct from the former covenant (*viz.* in form and words, not in the general matter and design); and thus they called it *The late Covenant, Our Covenant, Our Confession of Faith and Covenant*.—For evidence of this, the Presbytery refers to a Paper printed at *Aberdeen, anno 1638*; which is entitled,—*Answers of some Brethren of the Ministry, to the Replies of the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant*: And, in the preamble to the first Answer, when speaking of the old national Covenant and the new Bond, they call them *our late and preceeding Covenants*. Moreover, the Presbytery refers unto the *Protestation* printed *anno 1638*, entitled,—“The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burrows, Ministers and Commons, subscribers of the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within the kingdom of Scotland; made at the Market-crofs of *Edinburgh*, the 22d of *September 1638*.” In that Protestation there are several passages to the purpose in hand; the Presbytery shall name the following. In the close of the 6th Preliminary, speaking of the Bond then framed,—they call it *our late Covenant and Confession, descending more specially to the errors and novations of the time*. Again, in the 4th Reason of protest, they refuse to prefer the general Confession (*viz.* the former national Covenant) unto this, *which necessarily was now made more special*. And, in the 5th Reason, they call the national Covenant prefixed to their Bond *the former Covenant*; and their Bond they call *our Confession of Faith and Covenant*.—Again, the Presbytery refers unto a public Paper, printed *anno 1638*; which is entitled, *Reasons against the rendering of our sworn and subscribed Confession of Faith*. And, in Reason 4th, they speak of that late Confession or Covenant, as what was “according to the laudable example of our religious progenitors; who, by the LIKE OATH” (*viz.* the former Confession and Covenant) “have obliged us to the substance and tenor of THIS.”

But, not to multiply instances, from what has been said it appears,—that the Bond which was framed *anno 1638*, was, in its form and words, a *new and distinct* Confession of Faith and Covenant, and a separate oath; whereof the former

former Confession and Covenant was not a part, but a part of the preamble thereunto. And this manner wherein our reformers, *anno* 1638, renewed the former Covenant, accommodating it to their circumstances,—is an exact *precedent* for the manner of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery have in view; as shall be farther noticed. But what precedent is there here for that repetition of the old form and words, which Mr *Nairn* insists for? even none at all, but the contrary.—

It is farther to be observed, that, when the *solemn League and Covenant* was renewed *anno* 1648; as this was but five years after it was first sworn and subscribed in *Scotland*,—so there had not been any such change of their circumstances in that short time, as either required or admitted a laying aside the first form of the solemn League and Covenant: Yet, for hitting what was new in their circumstances, they renewed the same with a *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties*, which was framed at that time. And thus, still, Mr *Nairn* has no precedent for his way.

Further, as hath been formerly noticed,—Mr *Nairn* proposes the renovation of the Covenants at *Auchinshaugh* near *Douglas*, *July* 24th 1712, as a precedent to walk by: But even here, he wants a proper precedent for his present scheme. Mr *Nairn* speaks not of following any thing new in that example, farther than in an *exception of some particulars where there must be an alteration of the phrase*; and that can only respect the notes on the margin of the printed copy of the Covenants as then renewed. But, moreover, when the Covenants were renewed at that time, there was framed a *new Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties*; consisting now of about six sheets of paper in small print; and the Covenants were then sworn and subscribed expressly conform to the explication and application thereof—in the said Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties. And thus Mr *Nairn* has no precedent here, that will carry him out in his present scheme.

But, the Presbytery proceeds to manifest,

5thly, That the form and manner proposed by them, which Mr *Nairn* so heavily condemns,—is *really* a renew-
ing

ing of our solemn Covenants, according to the example of our reformers.

1. The manner which they propose is *really* a renewing of our solemn Covenants.—Mr *Nairn* indeed makes use of a popular enough argument, when he cries out against the Presbytery as abusing and imposing upon the people in this matter. He admits of nothing to be a renewing our Covenants, but what consists in repeating or saying over again the ancient form and words thereof: But this indeed is what the Presbytery never proposed, what they never had a view of putting upon the people. However, the manner of renewing the Covenants, which is expressed in their overture thereunto,—is really, and without any the least dissimulation, a renewing of these Covenants; as appears from the following considerations.

(1.) The Presbytery has not the least objection against the *old form* of our Covenants, as very suitable unto the time wherein they were framed; they only plead for alterations of the form, suitable unto our present circumstances.

(2.) Once and again, in the Confession of Sins, and preamble to the Bond, and also in the Bond itself,—they expressly acknowledge, profess and declare the *perpetual obligation* of our Covenants, national and solemn League.

(3.) The sins mentioned are acknowledged, not only as breaches of the holy law of God,—but expressly as breaches also of our solemn Covenants. Again,

The duties mentioned are engaged to, not only as binding by the law of God,—but expressly as binding also by the foresaid Covenants. Thus the *title* which the Presbytery gives unto the *Confession* and *Bond* is, “A solemn Acknowledgment of the public Sins and *breaches* of the same (*viz.* of our Covenants); and a solemn Engagement unto the Duties contained in them.”

(4.) The Covenants themselves, in their ancient form and language, are *prefixed* to the *new* Bond; as part of the preamble thereunto.

Now, here is a plain and express renovation of the whole *matter* and *meaning* of our Covenants, in an accommodation to our circumstances. And as our Covenants are to be considered as an obligation; so an obligation cleaves

cleaves properly to the matter and meaning, not to the bare words. Thus, what the Presbytery proposes is just, in words suited to our circumstances, a solemn avouching; not only an obligation which the law of God lays upon us, but an obligation laid on us also by our Covenants: And this done in an *oath*, in words to the *same purpose*, suited to *our* circumstances,—is properly a *renewing* of our Covenants. How then could Mr *Nairn* venture to say, That this could, in *no sense*, be called a renewing of them? What more could he have said, though the Presbytery had framed a Confession and Bond,—bearing no relation to or mention of our Covenants; and though they were acknowledging sins not as breaches of covenant, and engaging to duties not as already binding by covenant? But the case is quite otherways. And so here there is proposed a plain renovation of our Covenants, in every imaginable sense; excepting that of confining ourselves to a repeating by oath the form and words, the letters and sounds, wherein our Covenants were expressed an hundred years ago. But this is what the Presbytery have already manifested to be *unreasonable, absurd, impracticable, unprecedented*,—and so utterly *inconsistent* with a renovation of the Covenants agreeably to our present circumstances; as herein also Mr *Nairn* is *inconsistent* with himself. Again,

2. This manner of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery proposes, is according to the *example* of our reformers. For,

As the Assembly, *anno* 1648, appointed the renovation of the *solemn League*,—with a *new* Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties; this is just what the Presbytery proposes.

Again, as our reformers, *anno* 1638, renewed the national Covenant,—by framing a *new Bond* engaging to covenanted duties, and swearing this Bond as having the former national Covenant prefixed to it; so this is just what the Presbytery proposes.

Moreover, for manifesting yet farther the exact agreement betwixt this method of renewing the Covenants—and the practice of our reformers at that time,

(1.) The Presbytery refers unto a Paper printed at *Aberdeen*, *anno* 1638; entitled, *General Demands concerning*
the

the late Covenant: And unto another Paper, printed at *Aberdeen* the same year; entitled, *Answers to the Replies of the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant*. There we find the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in *Aberdeen* objecting against the late Covenant, or the new Bond that had been sworn; particularly, That it was *substantially different* from that which was subscribed by the King and his subjects *annis 1580 and 1581*. And, in the Answer to the first demand, it is replied,—That *the sound interpretation and application thereof to the errors of our times, can make no substantial change*. Again, in answer to the first Reply, it is observed,—That *a sound interpretation of the Covenant, although proceeding from a private person and altogether void of external authority, cannot make a substantial difference*. Thus we see, our reformers did not plead that the Covenant, as renewed by them *anno 1638*, was the same with the former Covenant in form and words; but that it was *substantially* the same: Which is just what the Presbytery pleads, in the present case.

(2.) The Presbytery refers unto a public paper formerly cited; entitled, *Reasons against the rendering of our sworn and subscribed Confession of Faith*. The King pressed the covenanters to render, or give up the Covenant or new Bond they had sworn; and in the 4th Reason for not rendering it, they observe, (as above cited)—that *our religious progenitors, by the like oath, have obliged us to the SUBSTANCE and TENOR of this*. And so the Bond framed by the Presbytery is proposed to be sworn, as that unto the SUBSTANCE and TENOR whereof our religious progenitors have obliged us by a *like oath*.

(3.) The Presbytery refers unto the public *Protestation* formerly cited. The King, by a proclamation, *anno 1638*, required the Covenant to be *renewed* by all ranks; in a repetition of the same form and words wherein it had been renewed *anno 1590*. Thus, we see that the debate the Presbytery now has with Mr *Nairn*,—is not altogether new: Our reformers had such another debate with the King, when he made the above proclamation: But they protested against the same; and, in the reasons of protest, they express several things to the case in hand. Some

passages

passages in that protestation, that cast light upon the present case,—have been already cited, and shall not be repeated. It may be observed farther, that our reformers there plead, That the Bond newly framed and sworn by them—was a necessary explication and application of the former Covenant to their circumstances ; that it was substantially the same with the former, and but a renovation of the former. Thus, in the 5th article of protest, comparing their *new Bond* with the *former Covenant*,—they call it *the necessary explication and application thereof already sworn by us*. Again, in reason 6th, speaking of their late Confession of Faith or Covenant, they thus proceed : “ What is the use of March-stones upon borders of lands, “ the like use hath Confessions of Faith in the kirk, to “ disinterminate and divide betwixt Truth and Error ; and “ the renewing and applying of Confessions of Faith to the “ present errors and corruptions, are not unlike riding of “ marches. And, therefore, to content ourselves with “ the *general*, and to return to it from the particular application of the Confession,—necessarily made, upon the “ invasion or creeping in of errors within the borders of “ the kirk ; if it be not a removing of the March-stone “ from the own place, it is, at least, the hiding of the “ march in the ground that it be not seen ; which, “ at this time were very unreasonable.” Moreover, in reason 11th, speaking anent the *sameness* of the former national Covenant,—and the then Bond renewing the same ; they plead that there is “ *no substantial* difference between “ that which we have subscribed, and the Confession subscribed in the year 1580 : More than there is between “ that which is hid and that which is revealed, a March-stone hid in the ground and uncovered, between the “ hand closed and open, between a sword sheathed and “ drawn.”

Thus, we find the plea our reformers managed against the King ; in defending their late Covenant as substantially the same with, and so a necessary manner of renewing the former : And it is, in so far, just such another plea which the Presbytery now have with Mr *Nairn*. And it is remarkable, that, when our reformers renewed the *national Covenant*,—by framing and swearing a new bond, different

different in form and words from the former ; they actually considered this as a *precedent* to be followed by posterity in the manner of renewing the Covenant : For, in the 5th reason of protest, they refuse to satisfy themselves with the old form and words of the Covenant,—and so to lay aside the new form and words whereinto they had put it ;
 ‘ Because this would (say they) precondemn also the like
 ‘ laudable course in the like necessity, to be taken by the
 ‘ posterity.’

After all then, can there be any thing plainer,—than that the method of renewing the Covenants which the Presbytery proposes, is *really* a renewing of them, without dissimulation : And that it is exactly agreeable to the *example* of our reformers ; yea, just such a method as they expected posterity was to take ?

H. Mr *Nairn* complains, that a swearing to endeavour the *extirpation* of Popery and Prelacy—is *altogether omitted in this present Oath or Covenant*.—But there is an express *abjuration* of and *engagement* against Popery and Prelacy,—in the Bond as it presently stands. As for the Presbytery’s not using there the word [*extirpation*] ; it is well enough known that *that* word has been, of *late* years, abused to a sanguinary sense, for propagating religion by offensive arms ;—quite *contrary* to the mind of our reformers : nor are we so situate as our reformers, in having the concurrence of civil powers for managing necessary and lawful process against malignants. And therefore it is necessary that the Presbytery make use of words, in this case, expressing the same matter ; in a way opposite to present errors, and agreeable to our present circumstances.

III. He complains that, *as to the civil part of the above Covenants, it is altogether omitted*. Now, what can Mr *Nairn* mean by this complaint ? One would think, from these words, that he were condemning the Presbytery,—for not applying the civil part of our Covenants to the present King and government. But this cannot be his meaning, because himself is contending against the lawfulness of such an application. Well then, Mr *Nairn* grants,—that the Covenants are to be sworn with application to our present circumstances, (as indeed otherwise they could not become our oath) : But he is utterly against applying the
 civil

civil part of the Covenants to our present circumstances; that is, the understanding it of the present King and government. Thus, a chief thing he is now contending for, all along,—is to drop and explōde any present meaning of the civil part; he is for swearing the civil part, only as declaring and avouching his principles and duty with respect to some Magistrate that may afterwards (and perhaps never) be. But this is only a propheticall meaning he gives to the words; which is inconsistent with the tenor of the words, and with the nature of the oath. It is soon enough to avouch one's principles and duty anent a Magistrate, when once that Magistrate has a being in the world: No body can have God's call to do so sooner; for God never calls to any duty, till he gives occasion for the discharge of it,—that is, till it be an actual duty.

Now when, after all, Mr *Nairn* finds fault with omitting the civil part, in renewing our Covenants; the sense cannot be, that he condemns the leaving out any present meaning of the civil part, (for this is the same thing he himself contends for): but the sense must be, That he condemns the not retaining and repeating the *bare words* of the civil part, as stript of any *present meaning* or sense at all. Thus, he is for exploding the *meaning*, and extolling the *words*; and he dissents and secedes from the Presbytery, because they will not do so too: A singular step indeed! Common sense tells that words are of no consequence at all, without some present sense: And if Mr *Nairn* acted consistently, when he is for omitting the meaning of the civil part; he would be for omitting the words too: But while he is zealous for the words, and against their meaning; let the world judge if any zeal can be more blind, absurd and ridiculous.

The plain case is, The Covenants were entered into and frequently renewed by the interposition of the *civil* authority as well as the *ecclesiastic*. But as there is no interposition at present of civil authority, in the renewing of the Covenants; so the Presbytery reckon it improper for them, to meddle in these matters that are of a civil nature, [or to apply the *civil part* of our Covenants—as an oath of allegiance to the present King and government]: And therefore they could do nothing this way, in their *accommodation* of the Covenants to the present time.—

If Mr *Nairn* means, that the Presbytery cannot renew the Covenant-oath of allegiance to the present government; this is what they grant, because it is not competent for them to impose oaths in civil matters: Though if the civil government, in a way of supporting reformation, were again imposing the same allegiance; they would have abundance of freedom to take it.

HEAD II. *Concerning the Presbytery's Principles about the present Civil Government.*

INTRODUCTION.

I. **M**R *Nairn* plainly teaches, that true religion has (by fundamental laws) been made a *part* of our *civil constitution*. As to which it must be observed, That although the Presbytery acknowledge,—that the profession, defence and maintenance of the true religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline and Presbyterial Church-government, agreeable unto and founded upon the word of God,—was secured by the fundamental constitution of the civil government in our reforming periods; which *deed** of constitution, in all moral respects, is morally unalterable,—because of its agreeableness to the divine will revealed in the word, and because it was attained to and fixed in pursuance of our solemn Covenants: Yet the Presbytery maintain it as a principle founded on the word of God, and agreeable to the Confessions of all the reformed churches,—that as the defection of a nation from attain'd to reformation doth not deprive them of a right to choose Civil Magistrates for themselves, and that as subjection to them and obedience to their lawful commands continues a duty incumbent upon the minority who adhere to the covenanted reformation; so also, that these *civil rights* of the nation and their Magistrates,—did neither *arise* from, nor were *innovated* by the reformation once attain'd to.—

* Whereas the constitution of the civil government might be considered objectively, in its general nature,—as meaning a mixed monarchy, in a proper balancing of the royal prerogatives and the liberties of the people: The peculiar phrase, [*deed* of constitution], is used here and afterwards,—to signify the particular manner of acting, as to the settling of that happy constitution; which was formerly on the side of reformation, but is now on the side of deformation.

to.—True religion is not only the church's blessing, but her very substance; so that true religion and a true church cannot be divided. Now, if true religion became a part of the civil constitution,—it inevitably follows, that the church became a part of the state: Which doctrine, as it is absurd in itself, so it lays a plain foundation for *Erastianism*; overturning the distinction betwixt the kingdom of our Lord Jesus, and the kingdoms of this world. Moreover, if the true religion (which is spiritual and supernatural) became a part of the civil constitution; then it could no longer remain a *civil*,—but became a *religious*, a spiritual, a supernatural constitution.

II. He farther speaks of certain *religious* qualifications being (by fundamental laws) made necessary in our Kings. If he means a necessity of religious qualifications, for the well-being of their administration,—and a necessity that the politic body should look out for these, in the choice of a King; then the Presbytery agrees with him: And this is what, by our fundamental laws, was established. But, if he means a necessity of these religious qualifications unto the very *being* of the regal office, herein indeed they are obliged to differ. For, if any qualifications of revealed religion (which Mr *Nairn* must mean, otherways he speaks not intelligibly) be necessary unto the very being of the King's office,—this just coincides with what was formerly said, as to the true religion being a part of the civil constitution: And it lays a farther foundation for *Erastianism*; for what more can be asserted of a church-officer, than that religious qualifications are necessary to the being of his office?

What then Mr *Nairn* asserts to have been done by our fundamental laws, is what no human laws whatsoever can or ought to do. No human laws can alter the true distinction of the state from the church, or the true nature of magistracy,—as established by the eternal and unalterable law of God: And, accordingly, the interpretation that Mr *Nairn* here makes of our fundamental laws, in reforming times,—is not only quite perverse, but inconsistent with the nature of things.

III. He brings in a comparison betwixt the obligation upon the *King* to profess and preserve the true religion, and the

the obligation upon the *People* to submit to his legal authority ; that the former is as binding as the latter. This comparison has no sense in it, unless he mean,—that the King's not fulfilling his obligation looses the people from theirs. And,

1. If he means that, upon the King's not fulfilling his obligations, and refusing to be reformed,—the people *collectively* considered, or as a *politic body*, are warranted to lay him aside ; this is indeed a principle inseparable from the true doctrine of liberty. But what then ? All this has no relation to the dispute betwixt Mr *Nairn* and the Presbytery. The people, collectively considered, in a politic body, are not in a state of subjection. It is evident that superiority must, in the order of nature, be before subjection, the King before the subjects ; but the politic body is, in the order of nature, before the King, giving rise to the King,—and so cannot be subject unto him. The politic body, therefore, is a party voluntarily *contracting* with the King ; and their continued concern with him, is anent the observation of a *contract*,—not anent the yielding of *subjection* : And the consequence is, that any argument anent the obligations or rights of the people collectively considered, as a politic body,—never touches the question anent the duties or rights of the people separately considered, as subjects. There can be no inference of the one from the other, as they are cases entirely distinct.

2. If Mr *Nairn* means, that the King's not fulfilling his obligations, as to the true religion,—looses the people, separately considered as subjects, from their relation to him, and from an obligation to obey his lawful commands ; this is impossible, without supposing that Christian qualifications are essential to the being of the kingly office : Which is an absurd and *Erastian* position, that has been already exposed.

IV. He proceeds to infer, That it is *inconsistent with our Covenants* to support and acknowledge the King and Parliament in their present condition.

But if Mr *Nairn* means,—that the principle which the Presbytery now maintains anent subjection to the present civil authority in lawful commands, is any way *inconsistent* with our *Covenant-allegiance* ; this is what the Presbytery altogether

altogether refuses: And their grounds for so doing may be afterwards laid open.—As to the clause in the solemn League, which binds *mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments*; common sense tells, that this clause can bind only in so far as Providence gives occasion for it. A Parliament in *Scotland* we have not: And as to the *British* Parliament, which is a part of the present legislative power; the Presbytery contend not, that the Covenant lays them under any obligation with reference thereunto, or that they have any concern therewith,—but what belongs unto the *Principle* which the Presbytery maintains, viz. *That we ought to acknowledge the present civil authority over these nations, and to subject ourselves thereunto in lawful commands.* This is a principle that respects only these things which are lawful in the present government: And it is very invidious to insinuate, as if it did any way countenance the corruptions of the present King and Parliament,—with reference to the *Union*, and the settlement of the *English* Church; all which the Presbytery, as well as Mr *Nairn*, acknowledge to be corruptions that should be testified against. What manner of fibness has the Presbytery's principle anent *lawful* things, with an acknowledgment of what they confess *unlawful*? Are not things lawful and unlawful *, altogether distinct from and quite opposite to one another? All that Mr *Nairn* advances of things unlawful in the present government, does indeed say,—That we ought to testify against these; but it does not, in the remotest manner, militate against the Presbytery's principle respecting what is still lawful.—His opposition to this principle is what he hath not produced *one reason* for: But has, all along, attacked the same only by *bare assertions*; which can be no reason for the course he has taken.

However,—for illustrating the truth, for the information of those who are prejudiced, and for the establishment of others; the Presbytery resolve to enter yet more particularly

* The words *lawful* and *unlawful*, all along in the present argument,—are to be considered as respecting the *law* of God.

larly into the question betwixt Mr *Nairn* and them, about the Civil Government. And all this shall be done in the following

DECLARATION AND DEFENCE of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY'S *Principles anent the present Civil Government* *.

PART I. *Concerning the Corruptions of the present Civil Government, in Matters of Religion.*

BY the indispensable call, the tender mercy, and the holy providence of God,—this Presbytery have been, and are gradually led out, in displaying the banner of a Testimony for the glorious Reformation once attained to in these lands; according to the word of God, and our solemn Covenants: As also, against the defections made therefrom, and the injuries done thereunto, in former and present times.

Some years ago they emitted a *Judicial Act and Testimony*; which they have since, through divine assistance, been enabled to maintain and prosecute. According to the particular calls of providence hitherto, that Testimony, together with the prosecution thereof which has already been,—was especially in favours of our ancient *ecclesiastical* Reformation; and against these evils whereby the same hath been, in a great measure, departed from and overthrown: While also a Testimony for our ancient *civil* Reformation,—and against these evils whereby the same hath been, in a great measure, deviated from and destroyed; was lifted up, and all along carried forward: Particularly as to these points which are more immediately connected with the principal matter fore said.

But, at this time, the Presbytery have a particular call of providence,—to bear witness more especially unto our ancient civil reformation: And not only against manifold defections

* This *Declaration and Defence* is now given entire, or without any abridgment; but with a proper *division* of it, under different *titles*,—which was not made formerly. Some *explicatory notes* are likewise added.—The *Introduction* comprehends what is to be found on the same subject, in the preceding Answers.

defections from and attacks upon the same; but also against some gross and dangerous *mistakes* that have been lately propagated thereanent.

There was a *paragraph* once inserted into the *overture* anent renewing the Covenants, and afterwards translated into a *separate act*: Which condemns, particularly, “the dangerous extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present civil authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands,—on account of the want of these qualifications Magistrates ought to have, by the word of God and our Covenants; even although they allow us the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom.” For supporting the condemnation of this extreme, the Presbytery were very far from being under any necessity to extenuate the corruptions of the present civil government, of what sort soever; particularly as to any want of qualifications, necessary by the word of God and our Covenants, wherewith the Magistrate is justly chargeable: Nor did the Presbytery reckon it warrantable for them to be silent, on that occasion, anent these matters; as the being so, in such a case,—might have tended to harden a wicked generation, and to bewilder a witnessing remnant. Accordingly, in the first clause of the foresaid *Paragraph* and *Act*, the Presbytery lay down as ground of humiliation before the Lord,—“the national apostasy under which the Lord’s remnant through the land have been groaning; while our rulers have not only neglected, but contradicted their duty, of espousing and supporting the covenanted principles of this Church,—whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to anger.”

And now, while the Presbytery are led out to a debate in favours of their condemning the above-mentioned dangerous *extreme*, and for vindicating the principle they maintain in opposition thereunto; they still, upon the foresaid grounds, reckon it unwarrantable for them,—to drop the conjunct and previous consideration of the *national apostasy*, and the corruption of our rulers: And they conceive that, for the conviction of an apostate generation,
and

and for the direction of the Lord's people in witnessing work,—it is necessary, on this occasion, to begin with enlarging upon that subject; particularly, by opposing our *ancient civil reformation* to our *present civil deformation*. And,

I. As it was once a peculiar duty of the *Jewish* nation, so it is peculiarly incumbent upon every civil state where-into Christianity is introduced, to study and bring to pass,—that civil government among them, in all the appertinances of its constitution and administration, run in an agreeableness to the *word of God*; be subservient unto the spiritual kingdom of *Jesus Christ*, and to the interests of the true religion and reformation of the Church: As otherwise they cannot truly prosper in their civil concerns, nor be enriched by the blessings of the gospel*.

This duty, so incumbent upon the civil state, doth generally fall under these two heads; *First*, The whole people, adjoining themselves to the true Church, should approve themselves to be true members thereof; by serious, several, and mutual endeavours to promote the true religion and reformation of the Church,—privately, publicly and universally, in their several places and callings. *Secondly*, This people, considered in their conjunct and *politic* capacity (as thus only the matter is competent unto them) should, by their deed of civil constitution, provide,—that their Magistrates be obliged to concur in the same true religion and reformation; and to rule them by laws no way prejudicial, but serviceable thereunto: As, moreover, they ought to obey, encourage and support their Magistrates in that way; and effectually to endeavour their information and reformation, where deficient or corrupt.

Our

* The case of the *Jewish* nation is referred to in this paragraph,—only according to the *general* view in which other nations are on a level with them, as to matters of religion. And it is not to be understood, as if any just consequence could be drawn, about *Christian* Kings,—from such rights and duties of *Jewish* Kings, in any direct cognisance of religious matters, as depended on the *peculiarity* of the dispensation which they were under: According to which, the maintenance of their distinct national state was a part of their religion; while the office and administration of these Kings were typical, with respect to the Lord *CHRIST*,—the King upon the *holy hill of Zion*.

Our ancestors, upon the reformation from *Popery*, were enabled unto great faithfulness in the discharge of this duty. The true religion, purged from the erroneous, idolatrous and superstitious abominations of *Popery*,—was, by the blessing of God, embraced and professed by all ranks; who were also engaged in a general and progressive course of reformation foresaid. Agreeably unto all this, the deed of Civil Constitution was set upon a reformed footing; by Act VIII. Parl. 1. *James VI* *.

VOL. I.

2 N

Though

* “ Because that the increase of Vertew, and suppressing of Idola-
 “ try, craues,—that the *Prince* and the *people* be of one persite religion;
 “ quhilk of God’s mercie is now presentely professed within this
 “ realme: **THEIRFORE** it is statute and ordained, be our Sovereigne
 “ Lord my Lord Regent and three Estaites of this present Parliament;
 “ that all Kinges and Princes, or Magistrates whatsoever halding their
 “ place, quhilkis hereafter in ony time fall happen to reigne and beare
 “ rule over this realme, at the time of their coronatioun and receipt of
 “ their princely authoritie, make their faithfull promise be Aith in pre-
 “ sence of the eternall God;—That, induring the haill course of their
 “ liues, they fall serue the samin eternall God, to the vttermost of their
 “ power; accordjng as he hes required in his maist haly word, re-
 “ veiled and contained in the New and Auld Testaments: And, accord-
 “ ing to the samin word, fall mainteine the trew religioun of Christ
 “ Jesus; the preaching of his halie word, and dew and richt ministra-
 “ tion of the sacraments, now receiued and preached within this realme;
 “ —and fall *abolish* and *gainstand* all fals religioun, contrary to the
 “ samin: And fall rule the peopill committed to their charge, accord-
 “ ing to the will and commaund of God—reveiled in his foresaid word;
 “ and accordjng to the loueabill lawes and constitutions received in this
 “ realme, na wise repugnant to the said word of the eternall God:
 “ And fall procure, to the vttermaist of their power, to the Kirk of
 “ God and haill Christian peopill, trew and persite peace in all time
 “ cumming; the richtis and rentis, with all just privileges of the
 “ Crowne of SCOTLAND, to preserue and keip inviolated,—nouth-
 “ er fall they transfer nor alienate the samin: They fall forbid and re-
 “ presse, in all estaites and degreis,—reise, oppression, and all kinde of
 “ wrang: In all judgement, they fall command and procure,—that
 “ justice and equitie be kept to all creatures, without exception; as
 “ the Lord and Father of all Mercyis be merciful to them: And out
 “ of their landes and empyre, they fall be careful to *ruie out* all here-
 “ tikes and enemies to the trew worship of God,—that fall be convict
 “ be the true Kirk of God, of the foirlaidis crymes: And that they
 “ fall faithfullie affirme the things above written, be their solemne aith.”

[It cannot be competent to the Christian Magistrate, to *abolish* and
gainstand false religion,—or to *ruie out* heretics, and enemies to the
 true

Though the above settlement was, for some time, followed by suitable administration; yet a course of lamentable defection and corruption therein did soon prevail: 'Till a reviving of the true religion and reformation in the Church took place, and was gloriously advanced betwixt the years 1638 and 1650. That *work of God*, which became then engaged unto throughout the three kingdoms by a *solemn League and Covenant*,—was also, in an agreeableness to this Covenant, accompanied with and supported by a *civil reformation*. In *England* (wherewith we have become more nearly concerned than formerly, by virtue of the solemn League and Covenant), the civil administration was, in some valuable instances, subservient unto the said work of God. But more considerable advances were made in *Scotland*: While, beside many laudable acts in the civil administration, the deed of Civil Constitution was farther reformed than ever before; by Act XV of the second session of Parliament, *anno* 1649 *. And, according unto this settlement, was King *Charles II* crowned at *Scoon*; *January* 1st, 1651.

The

true worship of God; by any other sort of means than what the true religion can admit of for its propagation: Which cannot admit of being propagated by any means of violence or compulsion. And it cannot consist with the doctrine afterwards taught in this Declaration and Defence, to acknowledge any power in the Christian Magistrate for judging of false religion or heresy, (or, which is the same, of what he takes to be so); unto an affecting of men's natural rights (their lives, liberties or properties) on these accounts: Or otherwise than unto an using the many powerful methods of discountenance and discouragement which are competent to him, without affecting these natural rights.]

* “ The Estates of Parliament, taking to their most serious consideration the unhappy differences between their late Sovereign and these kingdoms, caused by the evil counsels about him; unto the great prejudice of religion, and long disturbance of the peace of these kingdoms: As likeways the manifold acts of Parliament, and fundamental constitution of this kingdom, anent the King's oath at his coronation;—which, judging it necessary that the Prince and people be of one perfect religion, appointeth,—that all Kings and Princes, who shall reign or bear rule over this realm, shall, at their coronation or receipt of their princely authority, solemnly swear to observe in their own persons and to preserve the religion as it is presently established and professed; and rule the people committed to their charge, according to the will of God revealed in his word,—and the loveable constitutions received within this kingdom; and do sundry other things

The Presbytery intend not to affirm, that there was nothing *defective* in the above managements; or that no *imprudencies* or *mistakes* were to be found therein. It is evident, however, that, by the good hand of God, the Estates of *England*, but more especially of *Scotland*,—
were

“ things, which are more fully expressed therein : And, withal, pondering their manifold obligations to endeavour the securing of religion and the Covenants, before and above all wordly interests :—
“ THEREFORE they do enact, ordain and declare,—That before the King’s Majesty who now is, or any of his successors, shall be admitted to the exercise of his royal power; he shall, by and attour the foresaid oath, assure and declare by his solemn oath, under his hand and seal, his allowance of the National Covenant, and of the solemn League and Covenant; and obligation to prosecute the ends thereof, in his station and calling : And that he shall, for himself and his successors, consent and agree to acts of Parliament enjoining the solemn League and Covenant ;—and fully establishing Presbyterian Government, the Directory of Worship, Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as they are approved by the General Assembly of this Kirk and Parliament of this kingdom; in all his Majesty’s dominions : And that he shall observe these in his own practice and family; and that he shall never make opposition to any of these, or endeavour any change thereof.

“ It is also declared, enacted and ordained,—That, before the King who now is be admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall leave all counsel and counsellors prejudicial to religion, and to the National Covenant and to the solemn League and Covenant ; and give satisfaction to the Parliament of this kingdom, as it is now constitute, in what further shall be found necessary for the settling of a happy and durable peace,—preservation of the Union between the kingdoms, and for the good of the Crown, and for his own honour and happiness: And shall consent and agree, that all matters *civil* be determined by the *Parliament* of this kingdom; and all *ecclesiastic* matters by the *General Assembly* of this Kirk : For the which ends, the Estates of Parliament are resolved to make their humble and earnest addresses to his Majesty, with all possible expedition; all which they find themselves bound to prosecute, and resolve not to recede therefrom,—but to see the same really performed.

“ Likeas the Estates of Parliament discharges all the lieges and subjects of this kingdom, to procure or receive from his Majesty,—any commissions, patents, honours, offices, or gifts whatsoever; until his Majesty give satisfaction, as said is : Under pain of their being censured, in their persons and estates; as the Parliament, or any having power from them, shall judge fitting.

“ And if any such commissions, patents, honour, offices, or gifts,—shall be procured or received by any of the subjects of this kingdom, before such satisfaction; the Parliament declares and ordains all such commissions, patents, honours, offices or gifts, and all that shall follow thereupon,—to be void and null.”

were inspired with a noble and predominant zeal for the House of God, in all its valuable institutions; and attained to a considerable pitch of *civil reformation*, subservient unto the same: All which this Presbytery desires, with thankfulness, to commemorate and bear witness unto. Upon the whole, it is observable, that, in *Scotland*,—the reformation of the *Church* hath always (in a beautiful order) preceded and introduced the reformation of the *State*. But,

II. It was not long till our sky, thus clearing up, was sadly clouded,—and this beautiful work smothered, as it were in the very cradle; by the woful apostasy of that same generation; especially at, and after the restoration of King *Charles II.*

The fatal overthrow of the former civil reformation; the devastation of the house and heritage of God; the unparalleled course of perjury, treachery, tyranny,—and desperate hostility against the King, cause, and subjects of *Zion*,—and against the liberties of mankind; together with the nourishment of abjured Prelacy, Popery, and all abominations;—which were carried on with an high and heaven-daring hand, in that period, by the edge and under the wings of civil government;—are somewhat laid open in the *judicial Act and Testimony*: And are so fully manifested in known histories, as they need not here be particularly insisted on. However, these things have been so little considered and mourned over,—and the great atonement for sin so little looked to and improved for expiating the same; that it is to be feared the heinous guilt thereof is still lying upon the throne, the body politic, and all ranks in these lands.

At and since the wonderful *Revolution*, anno 1688,—the three kingdoms have been rescued, by the suprising favour of God, from intolerable tyranny, *Popery and slavery*. And this Presbytery dare not, without ingratitude to God and injustice to the subject presently under consideration, dissemble or lightly esteem the *stigma* then put upon the *infamous government* of the former period; the justice and honour done to the cloud of witnesses and sufferers through the same, by the act rescinding fines and forfeitures: As also, what security is given, by the present civil government,—

ment,—unto our religion *, lives, and liberties ; such as no other people now on earth enjoys the like.

Notwithstanding, though the Lord hath dealt so bountifully with these nations, they have not duly remembered him in his ways ; they have made no due requital, by returning unto that beautiful reformation,—for apostatizing wherefrom they were sorely plagued, during the space of about twenty eight years. The kingdom of *England*, at the revolution, still adhered unto their apostasy ; in keeping their government settled in favours of abjured Prelacy, and according to the wicked laws which had been made against *England's* reformation. The kingdom of *Scotland*, at that time, in settling their government, and in offering the Crown to King *William* and Queen *Mary*,—not only overlooked the whole civil reformation attained to betwixt the years 1638 and 1650 ; but left the wicked laws, revoking and razing the same, untouched and in force. Moreover, at the incorporating *Union* with *England*, anno 1707,—a farther and very lamentable step of defection was made in our civil settlement ; in regard the maintenance and preservation of the *hierarchy* and *ceremonies* of the Church of *England*, is a fundamental and essential article of the said Union : So that it stands upon terms opposite unto, and inconsistent with our Covenant-union ; whereby this kingdom is more deeply involved in perjury, and the guilt of *England's* apostasy and corruption,—while consenting thereunto. In a word, since the revolution, and by the union-settlement, though Papists and such as marry Papists are absolutely excluded from the Crown, (which is a thing very laudable) ; and while our Kings are obliged to swear, at their coronation, That they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement and privileges of the Church of *Scotland* as by law established : Yet they are, at the same time, taken bound and obliged to communicate

* The acknowledgment here made,—of what *security* is given, by the present Civil Government, unto our *religion* ; must be understood as connected and consistent with the finding of faults afterwards, in the present Civil Constitution and Administration, as to matters of religion. And the finding of these faults, cannot justly interfere with a thankful acknowledgment of what security is given (though not to our religion, in the special profession of it among those of the Secession ; yet) to the Protestant and Presbyterian religion in general, which is materially our religion.

communicate with, and to maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement and privileges of the Church of *England*, in the kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*. And, upon the whole, it appears,—that, under the present constitution, a mighty bar is thrust into the way of our covenanted reformation, both in Church and State ; yea, a gravestone is laid, and established upon the same.

Thus, our ancient civil reformation has been apostatized from and grievously defaced. Notwithstanding the golden season afforded us, and the powerful obligation we were laid under to the Lord,—by his surprising appearance for us at the Revolution ; yet all ranks have dealt very treacherously and ungratefully : They have not studied personal reformation ; they have not endeavoured, severally and conjunctly, to promote the true religion and reformation of the Church once attained to and professed in these lands : The body politic, particularly in *Scotland*, have never, by their deed of civil constitution,—provided that their Magistrates be brought under, and admitted upon obligations and terms, such as were fixed upon and established in reforming periods, (particularly in the Coronation-oath, *annis* 1567 and 1649) ; but such as are, in many respects, not only different from, but destructive of the same,—unto the great prejudice of real religion, and reformation in the house of God : They have never endeavoured to inform their Magistrates of their sin and duty in this matter, or to reform them from corruptions ; but, on the contrary, they have been a snare and a stumbling block unto them. And it is evident that, on all these accounts, great guilt and wrath from the Lord is still lying and increasing upon the body politic ; wherein also all ranks, our princes, our pastors, our people,—are very deeply involved.

Moreover, as our civil *settlement* has been thus corrupted, so it hath natively issued in a course of defective and corrupt *administrations* ; unto the dishonour of God, and the detriment of his work. The Presbytery do not pretend to give out a full enumeration of these, and they only mention the following.

At the *Revolution*, Prelacy was not abolished as contrary to the word of God and abjured by our Covenants : The settlement

settlement of Presbytery was according to the former settlement, *anno* 1592 ; and all the legal securities given to this Church from 1638 to 1650, were overlooked ; nor was any regard had to the solemn Oaths and Covenants which we then came under : The wicked laws *anno* 1661 condemning and razing our covenanted reformation, were left untouched ; a general oath of allegiance was imposed, plainly excluding the oath of our Covenants : And, contrary to the reformed practice *anno* 1649,—such were retained in places of public trust and military office, as were enemies to our reformation ; and had been deeply involved in the horrid defection, persecution and bloodshed of the former period. The power and privileges of the Church were incroached upon, by dissolving the Assembly 1692 ; and adjourning the same from time to time till 1694 : As indeed by the act 1592, according to which Presbytery was settled at the Revolution,—the Assembly is deprived of power, where the King or his Commissioner are present, to nominate and appoint time and place for their next meeting.

After the *Union*, the whole nation was made to groan under the weight of unnecessary,—repeated, sinful, and ensnaring oaths. A superstitious form of swearing, by laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels, was soon introduced from *England* ; and a foundation was laid for the farther debauching the members of this Church, by the *Sacramental Test* * : While also the *Oath of abjuration* was first imposed on these in civil and military trust, and afterwards extended to the Ministers of this Church ; and which, however, at length altered, did still homologate the united constitution,—and the corruptions of the Church of *England*, involved therein. Farther, though any active toleration to the least evil be altogether unwarrantable ; yet, in the year 1712, a very dangerous blow was given to the government and discipline of this Church, and a very wide door was opened to error and profanity,—by an almost *boundless toleration*. And, at the same time, a very sinful and sad encroachment was made upon the costly and valuable privileges of the Lord's people, and a door opened

* See the note on this subject, in the parallel place of the Judicial Testimony, p. 94.

ed for the corruption of the Church and the ruin of souls ; while the right of *patronages* (which had been abolished, *anno* 1649) was again restored : And however this was afterwards restricted, yet it has still continued an intolerable yoke and snare ; the lamentable effects whereof have overspread this land. Countenance has been likewise given for introducing amongst us the abjured superstition of observing *holy-days* ; and that by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice, in the latter end of *December*. And as, by the Union, this kingdom hath become subjected to a Parliament whereof the Bishops of *England* are constituent members ; so, an attempt is made to force the members of this Church unto an approbation of the *English* hierarchy,—while they can get no addresses received by the Upper House of Parliament, unless they bear a direction to the Lords *Spiritual* as well as Temporal.

The above are evils that have taken deep root among us, for a considerable time ; and the most whereof are more particularly spoken to in the *Judicial Act and Testimony*.

Moreover, the law of God hath been despised,—and a toleration, upon the matter, given to diabolical arts and practices ; by the act repealing the *penal statutes against Witches* *. Likewise (as hath been declared by this Presbytery in their *Declinature*),—a bold and fatal encroachment was made, *anno* 1737, upon the headship and sovereignty of *Zion's King* ; by that *Erastian Act* anent Captain *John Porteous* †. Farther, though it be unwarrantable for the Civil Magistrate in ordinary cases,—and where there is, and where access may be had to the judicatories of a right constitute Church, or that he sustains as such,—to appoint *fasts* and *thanksgivings* simply by his own power ; yet not only was the intrinsic power of the Church despised, some time after the Revolution,—in the appointment of several *fasts* and *thanksgivings* merely by civil authority : But, of late years, while the judicatories have practically surrendered this intrinsic power to the Magistrate ; he hath also practically assumed and exercised the same, in appointing *fasts*

* See the Note on this subject, in the parallel place of the *Judicial Testimony*, p. 164.

† See the Note on this subject, p. 168, &c.

fasts merely by his own authority : For, whatever was his design, yet this was plainly the design of his appointments ; in regard the judicatories accepted the same, as answers to their petitions for nominating the day,—and he hath never discouraged them, in their said surrender and acceptance : Against all which this Presbytery maintain a stated Testimony ; though they have not reckoned it necessary to apply the same, on repeated occasions, otherways than by their practice.

All these corrupt administrations this Presbytery judge to be causes of the Lord's wrath and deep controversy ; which he is pouring out upon, and pleading with all ranks in these lands. And as, by the above-mentioned apostasy and corruption in the settlement and administration of the present Civil Government, the measure of guilt upon the body politic and their legislators is greatly filled up ; so this Presbytery judge the said evils to be condemned by the word of God : As also, That we ought to be deeply humbled for, and to testify against the same ; in hope that the Lord will yet *purely purge away our dross, and take away all our tin.*

The Presbytery having (as they judged necessary) premised this Testimony for our ancient civil reformation ; and against the apostasy therefrom and opposition thereunto : They now proceed unto the second clause of the fore-mentioned *Paragraph* and *Act*, which hath given rise to Mr *Nairn's* dissent and secession.

PART II. *Concerning the Authority of, and Subjection to the present Civil Government.*

WHAT the Presbytery have yet ado here, is to *vindicate* their condemning “ The dangerous extreme, of “ impugning the present Civil Authority over these nations ; “ and subjection thereunto in lawful commands : ” The condemnation whereof may be sufficiently vindicated, by *defending* that principle which the Presbytery maintain in opposition thereunto.

SECTION I. *The true State of the Question.*

AND here, for determining the *true State* of the Question, from the industrious misrepresentation whereof Mr *Nairn's* scheme hath hitherto borrowed all its defence and reputation ; it is necessary to premise that,

1st, The question *is not*,—whether we ought to own the authority of mere usurpers or habitual tyrants, even in any lawful commands.

Mere usurpers can have no lawful authority : And if they shall acquire the consent of the people, whether expressed or tacit (as was the case of *Cæsar* with the *Jewish* people), they then cease to be mere usurpers ; and are invested with authority, whereunto God commands subjection and obedience in matters lawful.

Again, in order to render one an habitual tyrant, it is, at least, necessary, that he leave ruling by just laws ; and that he be engaged in war against the lives, or invading and overthrowing the avowed liberties and privileges of the nation, civil and religious ; or all of these : As was the case in persecuting times before the Revolution. It cannot be supposed that such a person has any real consent of the nation to rule, whence he can have no lawful authority.

Thus, however quietly and orderly one may be obliged to live under mere usurpers or habitual tyrants ; yet there should be no acknowledgment of their authority, as binding upon the conscience. But if any should have the face to alledge, That our present rulers do any way deserve these characters ; it is quite needless to reason with them.

2^{dly}, The question *is not*,—whether we should disobey the unlawful commands, and may defend ourselves against the oppression of rulers.

The Presbytery's principle of subjection and obedience doth only respect things lawful : Nor is it at all inconsistent with any self-defence that is necessary, lawful and expedient,—according to the word of God, and right reason ; such as our worthy ancestors endeavoured, at *Pentland* and *Bothwell*. Yea, there is no manner of inconsistency, betwixt being in a posture of self-defence against particular injuries offered by a Magistrate,—and avowing, at the same

same time; his title and authority in what lawful commands he may impose.

3dly, The question is *not*,—what Magistrates ought to be or do. There is nothing this way incumbent upon them, by the word of God or our Covenants, which the Presbytery do not acknowledge and plead for: Nor does their principle anent subjection and obedience,—homologate the least defect in these things; or bind up from endeavouring in our several capacities to have Magistrates reformed, according to the said obligation.

4thly, The question is *not*,—whether the present Civil Government be chargeable with many gross corruptions; both habitual and actual.

Mr *Nairn* endeavours to make the world believe, that the Presbytery's principle has some favourable aspect upon the corruptions of the Government (*viz.* these that are properly irreligious); and that his own scheme doth only set up for more faithfulness in that respect. However, the Presbytery confesses and condemn, not only the actual corruptions, or corrupt *Administrations*, which it is competent for them as a Court of Christ to meddle with; particularly, these above-mentioned: But also the apostasy from the former reforming deed of *Constitution*, and the corruption of the present settlement; which have, in some measure, been laid open. Only they cannot grant, that the civil nature and authority of the constitution are thereby subverted or invalidated.

5thly, The question is *not*,—Whether it be lawful for us to swear the present allegiance to the Civil Government; which the Presbytery acknowledge they cannot do: Seeing there are no oaths to the Government in being,—but what exclude the oath of our Covenants, or homologate the united constitution. And Mr *Nairn* had no occasion to make repeated mention, in his Dissents and Secession, of swearing allegiance; as he had never any ground given him, by the Presbytery, to suppose that they had any view thereof different from what is above expressed.

And now, it is abundantly evident,—that the *true state* of the question extends no farther than this, *viz.*

As, by the word of God and our Covenants, we are inviolably bound, in our several capacities,—to confess, oppose,

pose, and testify against all the corruptions and evils of the present Civil Government over these nations; whereby the reformation once established therein has been departed from, opposed and overthrown: OUGHT *we not*, at the same time, to *acknowledge* the *civil authority* of the said Government, in the administration and commands thereof that are lawful; and to yield subjection thereunto in these circumstances?

It is only in so far as Mr *Nairn* answers this question in the *negative*, that the Presbytery has any controversy with him anent the civil authority of the present Government. The Presbytery AFFIRMS, That *we ought to acknowledge the present civil authority* over these nations, and *subjection thereunto in lawful commands*; according as this their principle is held forth in their *Act* passed at *Edinburgh, February 3d 1743*,—which is to be subjoined unto this *Declaration*.

SECTION II. A Defence of the Presbytery's Judgment concerning the present Civil Government.

AND, for defence of this Principle, they affirm, in the manner following,—That it is *agreeable* to the *plain tenor of Scripture*; and to the *principles of all the reformed Churches*, particularly of *this Church in her Confession and Covenants*: Where it will also appear, that the Presbytery had just ground to condemn the opposite scheme now on foot.

ARTICLE I. The Agreeableness of the Presbytery's Judgment to the plain Tenor of Scripture.

THE Presbytery's principle anent the present Civil Government, as above declared, is agreeable to the *plain tenor of Scripture*.

The verdict of Scripture in this matter, is not comprehended in some few,—dark or transitory hints. The principle for which the Presbytery now contends, is obviously taught and confirmed by a great number of passages throughout Holy Writ: Yea, there are few truths, relative to the practice of Christians,—that are more clearly taught in the word, or more inculcated, than this is. But

it

it may suffice, at present, to adduce a few *Scripture Precepts* and *Examples*; expressly confirming the principle maintained by the Presbytery, as above-mentioned.

PROOF I. *From Scripture-precepts.*

IT is held forth unto us by *Scripture-precepts*, which are of perpetual obligation.

ARGUMENT I. *From Prov. xxiv. 21.*

THE first that shall be noticed, is recorded *Prov. xxiv. 21. My son, fear thou the Lord and the King: And meddle not with them that are given to change.* Though these words be expressed in the singular number, it would be superfluous to prove,—That they must be taken in a plural sense; determining the duty, particularly of the Lord's people, toward Kings: Nor could *Solomon*, while himself a King, be partial in this case, because he spoke as moved by the *Holy Ghost*.

I. The former clause of this precept is positive; *My son, fear thou the Lord and the King.* And the first thing which, in the present case, must be considered,—is the *duty* here prescribed towards Kings, *viz.* to *fear* them. This fear cannot be of a slavish sort, because it is commanded; and that as subordinate unto the *fear* of the *Lord*. Again, this fear cannot merely signify that disposition of mind which we ought to have toward Kings. But, as the fear of the Lord, in Scripture-style, doth signify, not only an inward disposition of mind; but also *all* these external duties that we owe to him: So the fear of Kings must also denote all these external duties that we owe to them. Now, from the nature of the thing, all such duties are reducible to these two heads. *First*, We must confess that they are Kings; by owning their authority, and submitting to their just laws. *Secondly*, That this acknowledgment and submission may not be treacherous,—we must, in our several capacities, testify against all these particular evils whereby they answer not or contradict the duty of Kings. These are the parts of fear toward Kings; so inseparable, that neither of them can be duly managed unless they be jointly exercised. And this is just what the Presbytery

bytery asserts, with respect to the present Civil Government.

The next thing to be considered here is, the *objects* of the duty enjoined, *viz. Kings*. And, upon this head, it must be premised,—that as the different forms of Civil Government agree in their general nature, and as none of them has any institution exclusive of others; so the general rule of duty towards the supreme legislative power under any one of these forms, answers as well under them all: However, it is monarchical or kingly government that is here immediately respected.

The question will now be, What sort of Kings are the people of God thus commanded to fear? And, in the first place, it is certain,—that they are commanded to fear only such as are acknowledged by the kingdom they are in; while none else are Kings with respect to them. In the next place, It is as certain,—that they are commanded to fear *any* whom that kingdom acknowledges as Kings, and *while* they do so. For,

1. This precept was still handed down to the *Jews*, from one generation to another, as part of the oracles of God immediately committed unto them; nor was it at any time altered, limited or suspended: And therefore it continued always an uniform rule of duty from God unto them,—with reference to *whatever* Kings were acknowledged as such, by the kingdoms of *Judah* and *Israel*; though most of these were chargeable with unparalelled evils,—not only in respect to their private character and conduct, but in their public administration. As it must be still remembred, that though God might justly plead a controversy with that land, and many times did so,—both for the sins of the body politic, in not attending to all the rules he gave them anent the choice of their Kings, and in not endeavouring to reform their wicked Kings; as also, for the sins of the people severally,—in not testifying duly against, but complying with the sinful statutes and idolatrous practices of their Kings: Yet, while the *primores regni* and better part of the nation acknowledged such as their Kings, consenting to their regal authority; the office and authority of these Kings did, therefore, still continue valid,—so as the particular subjects were bound in conscience

ence to submit unto, and obey their lawful commands : Because that civil authority, having its rise in the consent of the people according to the indispenfible law of nature,—it could not be subverted by their defection and apostasy ; or by their Kings, in consequence thereof, wanting scriptural qualifications.

2. The *Jewish* people were obliged by God to reckon that, in the matter of this precept, they were but on a level with the people of all other kingdoms ; in respect of whatever Kings were thereby acknowledged : And that they themselves were, by this precept, bound to fear these Kings,—when sojourning in their dominions. For these whom other kingdoms acknowledged as Kings, are, all along, by the Spirit of God in scripture, acknowledged and accounted of as such ; and that in as unexceptionable terms as any of the Jewish Kings are : In regard there is not the least word in scripture, which so much as insinuates that these kingdoms were wrong in thus acknowledging them ; but, on the contrary, the scripture always countenances them in doing so,—and leaves not the *Jews* any occasion of doubting, that the character and right of these Kings did not agree unto this precept. To this purpose, when our *Lord Jesus*, who is Mediator betwixt God and man, says, by his *Spirit* through *Solomon* (Prov. viii. 15, 16.) ; *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice ; By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the earth :* It is undeniable that, in these words, he not only narrates the government, but sustains the authority of Judges or Kings : And it is as plain, that not only the Jewish Kings are here spoken of, but all the Kings of the earth ; so that the authority of all is sustained on a level. When therefore the *Jews* received this precept, with reference unto their own Kings ; it is evident that other oracles of God, and particularly the above cited, did at the same time necessitate them to reckon,—that whatever Kings were acknowledged as such by other kingdoms, had an equal right unto fear from their people ;—and that they themselves were equally obliged, by this precept, to fear such Kings, when sojourning in their dominions : According whereunto, when long after some of them were scattered through the countries of such Kings ; this same precept

was

was repeated [1 Pet. ii. 17.], as in force with application to them in these circumstances.

In a word, this text doth plainly teach,—that the Lord's people, particularly, ought to fear all Kings who are acknowledged as such by the kingdom they belong to ; as there is no exception made here or elsewhere in scripture.

And, indeed, there was no need of any exception or limitation to be added unto this precept. He who commanded to fear Kings, did, at the same time, know well enough,—that neither all, nor most, nor any of them, were free of manifold and gross corruptions. By his inspiration it was, that *Solomon saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there ; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there*, Eccl. iii. 16. However, the precept given did sufficiently hit such cases, without needing any restriction. For as there never were, nor could be, any Kings acknowledged as such by a kingdom,—but who administered some justice ; so all the duty of particular subjects, under the worst of these Kings, is sufficiently comprehended in this command : As it binds them to acknowledge and submit unto their authority, in any lawful exercise of it, while the kingdom sustains their government ; but at the same time obliges them, and leaves them full capacity to testify and contend, in their several places, against all their corruptions,—and, in this way, to endeavour the reformation of the government : So that the subjection commanded, can never involve them in the guilt of public corruptions.

Here, then, the duty of the Lord's people, particularly, towards Kings, is fully stated ; and it is the same with what the Presbytery now affirms. Nor is this a duty of small importance ; while the *fear* of the *King* is commanded jointly with the fear of the *Lord* : And so, whatever religion any profess toward *God*,—they will not be found duly upright therein, when contradicting the duty toward Kings which God here requireth.

II. The latter clause of this precept is negative ; *Meddle not with them that are given to change*.

For understanding this, it must first be considered,—who are the persons referred to by the pronoun [*them*] : And it is needless to prove, because so evident, that the
text

text will not admit of any other sense here,—than to understand it of those who are bound to fear the Lord and the King, who yet are given to *change*; and whom, therefore, the sincerer sort are discharged to *meddle* with.

And now it is supposed, that there will readily be some men given to *change*; men of a restless spirit, of a double mind, and of an unstable conduct: Men addicted to novelties; and who, particularly, will depart out of the old road of duty toward civil superiors, upon new pretences. And where innovations are made here, there will readily be some change in the profession or practice of religion; as the fear of the *Lord* and the *King* are linked together, and the text speaks jointly of being given to change in both.

At the same time it is here implied,—that even the children of God are in danger of *meddling* with such persons; and have special need to be upon their guard against them.

Thus, in these words, there is an express condemnation of changes from the old path of duty towards civil superiors.

Again, there is here a solemn charge given to the sons of God, to notice the danger they are in of being led aside by the specious pretences that such persons may use,—and not so much as to *meddle* with them; for if they stand not at a distance, they may readily be entangled.

Moreover, this *caution* and *charge* is a plain confirmation of, and a fence that God hath set about that very principle and conduct which the Presbytery does maintain from this text.

ARGUMENT II. *From Eccles. x. 4.*

THE next precept that shall be considered, is found in *Eccles. x. 4.* *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.* And here the following observations may be made.

1. For the same reasons that were advanced upon the former text, this must necessarily be understood as spoken to the Lord's people,—with reference to any rulers presently acknowledged by the civil state which they belong to.

2. There is a supposition here made, *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee*. This *rising up* of spirit must be understood as groundless, and therefore sinful ; because the person spoken to is supposed not, as yet, to have left his place or duty. Again, this *rising spirit* must be understood as venting itself, by word or action ; for, otherwise, it could have no tendency to drive a person out of his place. And as the expression is general,—without being confined unto any certain occasion or degree of rising up, or unto any particular manner of venting itself ; it will therefore necessarily comprehend any wrath or wrong that a particular subject may meet with at the ruler's hand,—whether upon private quarrels, or on account of religion ; as enmity against religion is vented always upon the professors thereof.

3. There is a direction here given, *Leave not thy place* ; Which cannot be taken in a local sense, on several accounts ; and particularly, because then the next words (*viz. For yielding pacifieth great offences*), instead of being a reason for this command, would be a plain contradiction of it. The words must therefore be taken in a moral sense, as respecting the special business and duty of the subject ; which, as hath been considered, is to fear the King or Ruler. The first two clauses, then, of this text, do plainly teach us,—That, upon supposition of a ruler's being so corrupt as, without just ground, to discountenance, discourage or distress the subject, upon personal or religious accounts ; the subject must not, in the mean time, repay him evil for evil : But while he is bound to use lawful endeavours, as his calling gives access,—for self-preservation, for vindicating his innocency and the cause for which he suffers, and for having the government reformed ; he must, at the same time, continue in subjection and obedience to the ruler in lawful matters, while the civil state continues to acknowledge him. And as this can be no way inconsistent with his faithful endeavours otherways ; so hereby he will approve himself unto God and men,—as single, self-denied, and conscientious in these endeavours. But,

4. There is a reason added to this command, *For yielding pacifieth great offences*. This clause cannot consist with the
the

the former, unless it be taken in a moral sense. And as a reason is here given of the foregoing command, so it cannot make sense,—unless this *yielding* be understood as the same thing with the duty commanded. And therefore, the meaning will be this,—*Leave not, or keep, thy place ; for yielding, or the keeping of thy place, pacifieth great offences.*

Here then we are informed, that, when the spirit of the ruler riseth up unjustly against the subject,—corrupt nature (as is evidently seen in the present controversy) is ready to manage a selfish opposition ; in retaliating the ruler, by transgressing also the rule of duty toward him : And therefore, the subject's keeping by his duty in that case,—is fitly called an *yielding* ; as it is contrary to that selfish opposition which corrupt nature is inclined unto.

It is said, that this *yielding pacifieth great offences* : And it does so in two ways.

(1.) By way of antidote. For the subject's standing to his duty in that capacity, when the spirit of the ruler riseth up against him,—is an habile mean for convincing the ruler of his error, and for extinguishing the offence he has taken.

(2.) By way of anticipation ; as it is an habile mean for preventing farther evils and extremes which both the ruler and the subject may afterwards be driven to, if once the subject leave his place : For *the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out his ear ; therefore* (saith the Lord) *leave off contention, before it be meddled with,* Prov. xvii. 4.

And, upon the whole, it is very evident from this text,—that the scheme of such as oppose what the Presbytery here affirms, as it is a *leaving their place*, because of the unwarrantable opposition that the ruler stands in to them in any cause of truth which they profess ; so it is a direct breach of God's command,—and has a proper tendency to perpetuate these errors or evils wherewith the ruler is chargeable, instead of reforming him : Yea, it is properly calculated for driving both him and them farther forward into great offences. And, on the other hand, it is as plain,—that the principle and conduct which the Presbytery maintains, is openly held forth and expressly enjoined by God's command ; and that it is a mean and method
of

of God's appointment, for *pacifying great offences*, viz. in reforming the Magistrate from his present corruptions, in preventing the farther growth thereof,—and in preserving the Lord's people from other evils and extremes they may be driven to, in this time of trial and temptation, if they study not to *keep their place* as above explained.

ARGUMENT III. *From Luke xx. 25.*

THE third *precept* which the Presbytery adduces for confirming the principle here maintained, is delivered by our Lord, Luke xx. 25. *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.* And, for the clearing of this text, there are several things to be considered ; viz.

I. A question was now proposed unto our Lord, anent a certain people's subjection to a certain ruler. The people were not Gentiles, or such as had never been reformed ; but *Jews*, a people in covenant with God,—whom the Lord had chosen to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that were upon the earth. Again, the ruler was *Cæsar*, an heathen ; who, at this time, did actually rule over the Jewish people,—being by them acknowledged as their King, John xix. 15.

II. The question proposed to our Lord anent that people and this ruler, was, *Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or no?* The question is not, whether any tribute allotted to the use of the temple should be alienated unto Cæsar's use ; but it is anent paying of tribute in general, as an effect and token of their subjection unto Cæsar. And unto this general question our Lord answers, in the words above cited.

When his answer is considered, it appears too bold to pretend,—that therein he shifts the question, and leaves *Cæsar's* title unto tribute from the *Jews* undetermined. For,

1. It is very true that these hypocritical spies, who put the question to our Lord,—were sent out, by the Chief priests and the scribes, upon a captious and very wicked design ; which they were at liberty to pursue more privately, or before the people, as they should find occasion. And, accordingly, when they did now question him before the

the people,—it was not for information, as if they doubted anent paying of tribute to *Cæsar*; but it was *that they might take hold of his words* (or *entangle him*, as *Matth. xxii. 15.*) And it is equally true,—that as he perceived their craftiness, and rebuked them for it; so he gave them an answer that disappointed them: For *they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.* Their disappointment, then, did ly here,—that *they could not take hold of his words before the people*, which was the malicious errand they had been sent out upon. And this does not signify, that they could not understand his words; for then their wicked errand had been no more than to understand what he spoke, which is absurd: But the meaning is, that they could not *entangle him*,—or make an handle of his words against him.

However, for the farther opening of this case, it is needful to observe,—That, when proposing the question, as they deceitfully introduced themselves by professing that he did not *accept the person of any*; so, they did not want that our Lord should own *Cæsar's* title, as if hereby he would raise the people against himself: For there is no ground given to suppose that this would have provoked them, but the contrary. And besides, they were sent to take hold of his words, so as to *deliver him unto the power and authority of the Governor* who ruled under and for *Cæsar*; and before whom, therefore, they durst not accuse any for owning *Cæsar*. And so it is plain, that they could not presently have any thing in view,—but that either he should expose himself to the pains of the *Roman* law, by disowning *Cæsar's* title; or that he should own it in such terms, as would reflect or encroach upon the privileges of the *Jewish* Church and religion,—so as they might deceitfully forge an accusation against our Lord Jesus before the Governor, upon the matters of *their law*. But in any such expectations our Lord disappointed them. For, in his answer, he acknowledged *Cæsar's* title: And by annexing, at the same time, the command of rendering *unto God the things which be God's*,—he preserved the regard and obedience that were due unto God, in his Being and institutions; and determined the just manner and measure

measure of obedience unto *Cæsar*,—so as, however they might be rebuked by it, they could not find fault with it. Thus, he *disappointed* their wicked design in all respects. *They could not take hold of his words before the people*; they could not find him chargeable with any encroachment upon either civil or ecclesiastic law; nor durst they alledge any such thing, while the people were present and capable of contradicting so false an accusation. And now, they were not only silent,—but they *marvelled at his answer*: There was divine wisdom in it, worthy of the Son of God and worthy to be marvelled at; as it would have been every way unworthy of him, and unworthy of being marvelled at,—if his words had contained no wisdom but what lies in ambiguity, shifting or equivocation. But again,

2. To alledge that this was the case here, would be an using too much freedom with the person and perfection of *Jesus Christ*. He might indeed have lawfully refused to answer their captious question, had he seen meet; but to impute a shifting or equivocal answer unto our Lord, is to reproach and blaspheme him.—For, either *Cæsar had not* a just title, or he *had*: If he *had not*, then a shifting answer would have, at least, dissembled and palliated sin; instead of tending to reclaim from it;—if he *had*, then such an answer would have, at least, dissembled and dishonoured truth; instead of declaring and recommending it. Besides, the answer given plainly bears the shape and force of a command: And it must be very dishonouring unto the person and perfection of *Christ*,—to fix upon him an ambiguous and shifting command, or a command that commands no certain thing. Again,

3. To suppose, that our Lord's answer shifts the question, would be an using violence upon the words; for, shifting is inconsistent with the very nature of a command: And farther, it is remarkable that,

(1.) Our Lord begins to confound his crafty examiners, by enquiring at them anent the coin of their current money, (as the tribute-money could have no coin distinct from other money); and he finds, out of their own mouth, that it bore *Cæsar's image and superscription*: Thus he draws from themselves, both an evidence and acknowledgment of *Cæsar's* dominion over them.

(2.) He

(2.) He immediately brings this in as a reason of the command, *Render THEREFORE unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's*. And this word [*therefore*] can have no reasoning in it, and the form and strength of the whole argument must be destroyed; unless it be understood to intimate that the command is brought in as agreeing unto, and as an inference from what had been immediately before confessed, *viz.* That the money bore *Cæsar's image and superscription*. Now the command cannot possibly agree unto, or be an inference from this; unless it enjoin the paying of tribute to *Cæsar*. And so the meaning is, as if our Lord had said,—*Cæsar* is actually, and by the nation's consent, your Supreme Civil Ruler; as appears, among other things, from this,—that the money ye use bears his image and superscription: For though this be not a mark of his having the *property* of all your money; yet it is a plain *evidence* of his said *superiority*, and your *subjection*: Therefore render unto *Cæsar* whatsoever is incumbent upon subjects, and particularly tribute; as unto all this he has a lawful right. — But,

(3.) Abstracting from the connection, these words [*Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's*] can mean nothing at all; if they mean not that *Cæsar* had a civil right, that there were things thus belonging unto him. And moreover, to deny this would not only be the utmost violence upon these words; but would also force a meaning upon the next words, grossly erroneous,—which could not be ascribed unto our Lord without blasphemy. For, if *Cæsar's* right be undetermined here, then *God's* right is undetermined in the following words, *viz.* *And unto God the things which be God's*. If there be ambiguity in any of these clauses, there must be in both; for both *God's* right and *Cæsar's* are in the same terms asserted: And this is, of itself, a sufficient argument against interpreting our Lord's words as equivocal,—which some have done; that thereby he is brought in as shifting, and calling in question the prerogatives of his *Father*,—before that generation, which stood in peculiar need of quite other doctrine.

Thus, that our Lord enjoined subjection by individuals unto *Cæsar*, particularly in paying tribute, has been cleared:

ed: Yea, in doing so, he proceeds upon no other or better qualification in *Casar*,—than that he was actually and allowedly in power over the *Jewish* nation; as appearing, particularly, by the coin of their money. And it must be granted, that the command is of equal force in all parallel cases; and that, therefore, it plainly agrees to the principle here maintained by the Presbytery.

The *precepts* already insisted on were given unto the *Jewish* people, as a special rule of duty toward civil rulers; and, as such, they were immediately handed down to *Christians*, in these Churches that were planted by the Apostles.—But the Divine care, in providing for their establishment in this duty against all temptations, did not rest here. The Apostles of our Lord, and by his counsel, were not ignorant or forgetful of Satan's devices; in improving every handle, for tempting such as he cannot detain in profanity, to turn over into some apparent purity of their own invention. And considering the extraordinary handles which that subtle adversary had, for tempting these Christians unto such an extreme,—in throwing off all civil concern with such rulers as they had then ado with; the Apostles were therefore specially directed to build some new and very strong bulwarks, for defence at this quarter: And which are of standing use in all ages, against any such errors and mistakes. Thus,

ARGUMENT IV. *From Rom. xiii. 1,—7.*

THERE is another *precept*, very express unto the purpose in hand, which is declared *Rom. xiii. 1.*; being also explained and confirmed downwards unto the 8th verse of that chapter: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, &c.*

The present design neither requires or permits, that these verses be expounded,—either wholly, or according to the order in which they ly: But it is needful briefly to lay open and vindicate the establishment they give unto the principle now asserted; so as any who will wrest them (against the express warning, *2 Pet. iii. 16, 17.*) may be left inexcusable. And, for this end, there must be some separate consideration of four things; whereunto the

the matter of these verses is reduceable, *viz.* The *objects* of the command, the *duty* commanded, the *objects of this duty*, and the *reasons* whereby it is enforced.

I. The objects of the command are called *every Soul*; by which expression (according to Scripture-style, the context, and the Apostle's scope) are signified *human persons*: Particularly all these at this time in *Rome*, who had embraced the Christian profession. The whole Epistle was specially directed to them: And in the 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th verses of this chapter, the Apostle expressly inculcates the duty commanded upon them; in the pronouns,—*Thou, thee, you, and ye.*

II. The duty here commanded comprehends the whole of what men can owe, even unto any civil superiors as such. It is, in general, to *be subject*, (ver. 1): particularly in *rendering tribute, custom, fear, and honour*, (verses 6, 7.); and that *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*, (ver. 5.),—or, not only from the consideration of danger but also of duty. This is the utmost civil subjection that can be due to any: And all this is here enjoined upon every soul; particularly, upon all the Christians then living in *Rome*.

III. The objects of this duty are called *higher powers*, ver. 1. And it is certain, that this character doth properly signify, not civil offices but officers; not *magistracy* in the abstract, but *Magistrates* in the concrete: And particularly the Magistrates then existing in the *Roman* empire.

Toward the clear perception of this, it may be considered,—that if the Apostle were speaking without any respect to the persons at that time in power through the *Roman* empire, and so excluding them from the proper right of Magistrates; he would then be plainly departing from other Scripture-precepts, particularly these already insisted on: He would be openly contradicting his own inspired writings, [*Tit.* iii. 1. *1 Tim.* ii. 1, 2, 3.]; he would be openly condemning the constant and approved tract of Scripture-examples,—and particularly his own, —*Acts* xxiv and xxv. Thus, also, he would be openly commending what is openly condemned, *2 Pet.* ii. 10. *Jude* ver. 8. But, moreover,

1. To alledge that he speaks of *magistracy* in the abstract, and not of Magistrates, particularly such as then were,—makes his language altogether absurd. For there is a plurality here spoken of [*viz. higher powers*]; and this plurality must be all of the same general nature, because it is but one and the same duty which is commanded toward them all: But it is absolutely impossible and absurd, that there should be a plurality of *abstracts* of the same general nature; because one abstract thing exhausts the whole nature of that thing. Though then there be many Magistrates, yet magistracy can be but one in number: And to use or explain the plural word [*powers*] in a civil sense, and any other way than as properly signifying persons in power,—is perfectly absurd, as being inconsistent with the nature of things. Nor is it any thing less absurd, to enjoin subjection unto Magistracy in the abstract; because it has no real being in the abstract, and it is impossible to be subject unto that which really is not. In the matter of subjection, magistracy must always be considered as subsisting only in the person of Rulers; and the *Romans* of that time could not be subject to it, but as subsisting in the person of these Rulers who then were. Agreeably unto all this,

2. It is usual in Scripture, that the abstract be put for the concrete; as there are five instances of this in one verse, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. *And God hath set some in the Church,—miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.* But, more particularly, when the plural word here translated [*powers*] is elsewhere used in Scripture, it always properly signifies persons in power; as *Luke* xii. 11. *Eph.* iii. 10. and vi. 12. *Col.* i. 16. and ii. 15. 1 *Pet.* iii. 22. *Tit.* iii. 1. The first and last of which texts are parallel. in the present case, unto this now under consideration. And,

3. To fix any other meaning upon the word here, as if the Apostle were not speaking of Magistrates, particularly such as then were; not only is inconsistent with the nature of things, contradicts parallel texts of Scripture, and renders Scripture-language of an unfixed sense: But it represents the Apostle as writing needlessly, and under a sinful and dangerous mistake; contrary to the infallible conduct of the

the Holy Spirit he was under. It is essential to all the books of Scripture,—that every part of them was needful, with respect to the duty and interest of men; at that very time when they were first wrote, as well as in after ages: while it would be an impeachment of God to alledge, that he ever made any revelation which was of no use in the time when it was made. But as the passage of Scripture now insisted upon belongs to the rule of manners,—what need of it could the *Romans* then living stand in; if it was not to be applied unto themselves, with reference to the rulers then in being? What manner of use could they, in this case, have for it? How needless behoved to be the Apostle's labour, in giving a rule of manners, with reasonings and expostulations thereanent,—unto persons who had no interest in it; no warrant, no access to meddle with it? Yea, his mistake in doing so behoved to be sinful and dangerous: Because if it was unlawful for that people to apply what he wrote unto their own case,—the manner of his writing was calculated for leaving them unto, and leading them into sin. For, while he presseth and reasons with them anent the duty of subjection to higher powers; he nowhere gives them the least hint, that they ought not thus to apply his words: He says nothing to prevent their doing so. Yea, as appears from what has been advanced,—it was impossible for them to receive his Epistle as canonical, without making such application: Nor was it otherwise possible for them to understand what is here written. For,

4. In this passage, the Apostle puts it beyond all doubt,—that, when mentioning *higher powers*, he properly means persons in power; particularly these whom the *Romans* had then ado with: So that his words do openly reject any other sense. For, when giving a reason of subjection to these same *higher powers*,—he calls them RULERS, (ver. 3.), and God's MINISTERS, (ver. 6.): And, speaking individually of the *power*, he calls him the MINISTER of God;—He that beareth not the sword in vain,—a REVENGER to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, (ver. 4.). There can nothing be plainer than this; and it is as plain, that he speaks immediately of the rulers who then were. For (ver. 1.) he calls them powers
THAT

THAT BE (*real*, a word denoting real and present existence); *Powers* that ARE *ordained*: And, all along, he speaks of the *powers* and *power* in the present time; as persons then actually in office. Accordingly, he inculcates subjection in its several parts; as the duty of these very Christians then in *Rome*, and as a present duty: While (ver. 6, 7.) he says unto *them*, Pay YOU tribute, — Render tribute, — Custom, — Fear, — Honour. And that *Paul* should enjoin, or they undertake the present performance of such things, except toward present rulers,—is altogether absurd and inconceivable.

And now, that the *Spirit of God*, by *Paul*, did here enjoin civil subjection in its full latitude and all its parts, upon the Christians then in *Rome*, toward rulers then in the *Roman* empire,—is so certain and manifest, that it must be astonishing if any doubt were entertained anent it.

IV. The reasons of this duty, which are here improved, come next to be considered. And these are generally two: The first whereof lies in the *original institution* of Civil Magistrates, (ver. 1, 2.); and the second in their *duty and administration*, (ver. 3, 4, 6.).

And it must be first observed, that to refuse any thing already proven (particularly the precept of subjection, ver. 1, 5, 7.), as having an immediate respect unto Magistrates in the concrete, and these in the *Roman* empire,—upon pretence of any insuperable difficulty in applying unto them what is asserted in the Reasons of Subjection now before us; not only implies an heavy reflection upon the Apostle, as writing falsehood or noway to the purpose: But, it is a plain and open abuse of these very reasons. For it is essential unto the nature of reasons,—that they suppose it to be already concluded upon, what the thing is for which they are advanced; otherways they are advanced for nothing, or we know not for what,—and so are no reasons at all, can have no light in them, nor cast light upon any thing. Thus, in the present case, before the reasons of the command be noticed,—it must first be determined who are the objects of the command, what is the duty commanded, and who are the objects of that duty. The reasons must suppose these things to be already

ready determined; and, therefore, can give no help in determining them: And when the determination is once made, no objection can be brought from the reasons against it; because, in the nature of the thing, it must be the standard for trying the reasons,—and not they for trying it, but only for illustrating and confirming it. The sense, then, of these reasons [ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.], must be regulated by the things already proven: And to proceed otherwise, is to wrest these dictates of the Holy Ghost, to cast the whole matter loose; and most unreasonably deny Scripture that common justice which all language requires. Moreover, it is certain,—that civil subjection, in its full latitude and all its parts, is here enjoined upon the Christians then in *Rome*, toward rulers then in the *Roman* empire; and this has been so far manifested,—that there is no room left, in any event, for coming back upon it. If, therefore, there should seem any insuperable difficulty in applying unto such Magistrates the characters here given of the *higher powers*; nothing remains unto one, who would deal reverently with the oracles of God,—but to believe the certain evidence that these indeed are the persons meant, and to rest in an humble confession of ignorance as to how they come to be so spoken of. However, that in these reasons the Apostle doth no way contradict or darken the command of subjection, as respecting these *Roman* powers,—by advancing any thing which was not applicable unto them; is sufficiently plain. For,

1^{mo}, The first reason of subjection lies in the *original institution* of Civil Magistrates, (as expressed ver. 1.); *For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God.* Here then it is asserted, That *the powers that BE* (*viz.* the rulers presently in the *Roman* empire) *are ordained of God.* Yea, it is farther asserted,—That *there is NO power* (*viz.* no Civil Magistrate) *but of God, viz.* in a way of ordination. Now this says not, that men who are of a superior place in civil society by bare possession or mere force,—are, as such, ordained of God: For these are not *powers* in a moral sense, and the text speaks only of all that are so; or of all those who are in the possession and exercise of magistracy by the will and consent of

of civil society, as these only do properly fall under the denomination of Magistrates.

Such, yea all such, are here said to be ordained of God. And they are so, not merely in respect of providential dispensation; but also of preceptive institution. For the remainder of natural light, in the moral dictates of right reason, is the natural and eternal law of God: Now this divine law not only endues men, in their present estate, with a natural inclination to Civil Society and Government; but it prescribes unto them an indispensable necessity of erecting and maintaining the same in some form, as a moral duty,—the obligation and benefit whereof no wickedness in them can loose or forfeit. And therefore, wherever they voluntarily constitute or consent unto any form of Civil Government, under the rule of any particular persons,—whatever sin be in the circumstances of this their deed, with respect to the Government or Governors which they constitute or consent unto; yet the deed itself, or the substance of the deed,—is always in consequence of, and agreeable to God's law: Wherefore their Governors, as such and in the substance of the matter, are *ordained of God* according to that law.

And this is that divine ordination which the Apostle ascribes to all Magistrates as such; and, particularly, unto these of his day in the *Roman* empire: While, whatever distinguishing qualifications or approbation God may bestow upon some; yet no Civil Magistrates in the world can have any other sort of divine ordination. And, as this did belong unto these *Roman* Magistrates, justly therefore does the Apostle argue, with application to them (ver. 2.); That *whosoever resisteth the power* (*viz. the Civil Magistrate, as such*) *resisteth the ordinance of God: And they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation; or be condemned on this account*

2do, The second reason of subjection lies in the duty and administration of Civil Magistrates (as expressed, ver. 3, 4. 6.); *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God unto thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword*

sword in vain: For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. — For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Now, for laying open the force of this reason,—and obviating any seeming difficulty, in applying the things here said unto Magistrates, particularly such as ruled among the Romans in *Paul's* day; the following considerations may suffice.

1. The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which these invested with Magistracy can propose; in a sole respect unto that office. And as, in prosecuting this end civilly, according to their office, it is only over mens good and evil works that they can have any inspection; so, it is only over these which they must needs take cognizance of, for the said public good: While, at the same time, their doing so must be in such a manner, and proceed so far allenarly, as is requisite for that end; without assuming any Lordship immediately over mens consciences, or making any encroachment upon the special privileges and business of the Church. And moreover, as the whole institution and end of their office are cut out by, and lie within the compass of natural principles; it were absurd to suppose, that there could or ought to be any exercise thereof towards its end, in the foresaid circumstances, but what can be argued for and defended from natural principles: as indeed there is nothing especially allotted and allowed unto Magistrates, by the word of God and the Confessions of the reformed Churches, but what can be so. Now, it must be agreeably to all THIS, that the Apostle signifies Magistrates to be *God's Ministers for good*; concerning themselves with *good and evil works*,—in a way of *terror, praise, or revenge*: For he does so in a sole respect unto their civil office*.

2. What

* The doctrine set forth in this paragraph is of a fundamental nature, with respect to the whole other principles contained in the present Declaration and Defence; nor can these principles properly rest, upon a more superficial or narrower foundation. And it is a special excellence of the Secession-Testimony, that it contains such principles; which the Associate Presbytery was very unexpectedly called forth to declare and defend, by the controversy which Mr *Nairn* introduced among them: Principles, unto the establishing of which—reason and religion do beautifully

2. What the apostle thus ascribes unto Magistrates, is in some measure competent unto all such, in every nation or state ; and it always was so, particularly unto these in the *Roman Empire* of whom he immediately speaks ; as may be seen, *Acts* xxv. 6.

True.

thfully concur ; as to these natural rights of mankind, in civil society which were not so properly understood or acknowledged in some former periods. And perhaps they are the first ecclesiastical court that was ever led to explain and inculcate, in such a particular and extensive manner,—the doctrines and duties held forth in the word of God, as to the business of Christians with the civil governments under which they live.

The Writer of this account is the only person now remaining in the Associate Synod, who had special occasion to be acquainted with the precise intention upon which the several terms of the above-paragraph (with the other terms of this Declaration and Defence) were originally laid. He does not mean any other intention than what the words themselves, when properly weighed, do naturally and necessarily suggest. But as this may not be so readily adverted unto, in a cursory reading of what is purposely concise and comprehensive ; he offers the following paraphrase and explication of it.

1. The great end of Magistracy is the *public good* of society ; distinguished from all interfering private interests : The public good of *outward order* ; as not versant, like the Gospel-ministry, about the disorders of mens hearts :—And the public good of *common order* in all *reasonable* society : not only in the general society of the nation or commonwealth, but also in all the particular societies comprehended within the same, civil or religious,—so far as these do not strike, according to the principles of right reason, against the peace and welfare of the general society : that each may enjoy the benefit of the Magistrate's office, for preserving such order as is common to all ; according as each partakes of the common nature of society. And this *great end* of the Magistrate's office, is the *only end* that he *can* propose ;—that he can equitably and justly propose, in a *sole* respect unto that office ; whatever other good ends he may propose to himself, in respect to any other character which he bears. All which public good is ultimately *unto the glory of God*, as the universal Sovereign of the world ; an acknowledgment of whose Being and Government, lies at the root of all confidence and duty in human society : while this acknowledgment is also made, at least materially, in all that maintenance of good order.

2. These invested with magistracy are to prosecute the above-mentioned end of their office, according to the nature of it, *civilly* ; in such ways as agree to the nature of civil society, without subordinating any religious institutions or ordinances to that end : In doing which, it is *only* over mens good and evil *works* (comprehending works of the tongue, as well as hand) that they can have any inspection ; without pretending to any control of mens judgments, hearts or thoughts : And this inspection is *only* over these good and evil works of men which they must needs take cognizance of, for the *said* public good ; so that they

are

True indeed, the advantage in this case lies very far on the side of such—as have occasion to exercise their office for promoting the Church's public good ; while at the same time they are privileged with (and endeavour to discharge their other special business as well as this, accord-

VOL. I.

2 R

ing

are not to interfere with any of mens works, in which the public good of society is not properly concerned.—At the same time, their jurisdiction about mens works must be in *such* a manner, and proceed *so far only* as is requisite for the said public good ; only in a civil manner, as above-expressed,—and without proceeding so far as to serve the purposes of resentment or private interest, beside or beyond the public good. Thus, the Magistrate must not assume any Lordship immediately over mens *consciences* ; in offering to make himself a judge of mens religious principles : Nor must he encroach upon the *special privileges* and *business* of the Church ; by assuming a cognizance of mens religious conduct or behaviour, farther than the public good of society is concerned,—while all other cognizance thereof belongs particularly to the Church-State.

3. It is to be considered, that the whole *institution* of the Magistrate's office lies in *natural principles* ; being no way founded in the revelation of grace, nor at all peculiar to such as enjoy the benefit of that revelation : And accordingly, the whole end of his office must be understood as *cut out by* the same natural principles ; so that it cannot, in any part or degree, extend beyond the compass thereof. It were therefore *absurd* to suppose, that *any exercise* of that office were competent unto or incumbent upon the Civil Magistrate, precisely as such,—other than what can be *argued for* and *defended from natural principles* ; without having recourse to any principles of revealed religion, for the rule or measure of his magistral administration.

But all this is obviously meant of what the Magistrate owes unto all his subjects in common,—and of how he is to proceed with them, by way of necessary jurisdiction : That, in all such matters, his procedure is not to be according to the rule or measure of revealed, but of natural principles. Whereas in matters which are optional and arbitrary to the supreme Magistrate, with respect to his subjects,—and what must be confined to some of them, as the employing of persons in public trust under him, (which none can claim as their natural or birth-right ; nor can justly complain of an encroachment upon any such right, by their not being so employed) : The Christian Magistrate ought to determine himself, not merely by natural,—but also by revealed or Christian principles ; while all the concerns of earthly kingdoms, with all the influence that is competent to every civil station, so far as consistent with the nature thereof,—should be subservient to the kingdom of CHRIST. And this is the case ; as to all that countenancing and encouraging of the true friends of the Christian state—which he is very eminently and effectually capable of ; with all the discountenancing and discouraging of the enemies of that state, which he is as eminently and effectually capable of ; without any encroachment on their natural or birth-right privileges, upon religious accounts.

ing to) the full discovery which God's word hath made,—of these natural principles that comprehend the due exercise of their office, as well as its institution and end. However, as all Magistrates have still enjoyed some discovery of these, in the dictates of reason ; and as they have always had occasion, and been obliged to improve the same, for the good of civil and natural society, in what the Apostle here describes : So there never were, nor could be any Magistrates or persons in civil power by the will of their people, but in whose administration something of this took place ; in so much as thereby God has been pleased to preserve some external order and equity in the world,—and to restrain mankind from becoming altogether as the fishes of the sea, the greater devouring the less. And this was now the case, with reference to these *Roman* Magistrates whom the Apostle has particularly in his eye.

3. The Apostle is here speaking of these rulers—*all-en-ary* as such ; abstracting from every other view of them, either good or bad. For every thing he says of them was truly and only verified, in their civil office and administration. Thus he says not a word, nor any way enters into the question,—anent their personal characters or qualifications, moral or religious ; though undoubtedly there was, at least, much evil about them in this respect. Again, he takes no manner of notice anent their being chargeable with any Mal-administrations ; either in a way of omission or commission : Though yet it was certain that there never were nor could be any Magistrates, either wholly or near wholly free of these ; and without having much or any thing in their administration, besides what precisely answers the fair character he now gives of them therein. It is evident, then, that the Apostle, without refusing that there were many other, and many contrary things to be said anent them,—speaks of them *all-en-ary* as rulers ; or as in the lawful possession of ruling power, and in so far as truly exercising the same. In a word,—though there were many things different, odious and opposite to be seen about them ; yet he does not pursue his present consideration of them any farther than as they were truly wearing, and found walking within the proper compass

pass and limits of magistracy. Their practice did not always answer these things; their actual attendance thereunto was far from being continual: But these things were true, and always true of them,—considered in the lawful possession of, and so far as truly exercising civil power; their attendance, in this respect, was continually unto these very things,—because altogether confined thereunto. And now the Apostle was, at this time, directed by the Spirit of God to represent Magistrates purely in the above shape; and that for very good reasons and wise purposes, *viz.*

(1.) His proper scope toward the Romans here, was to inculcate upon them the duty of subjection unto Magistrates; and this could not lead him out to consider such any other way, than precisely as such.

(2.) For satisfying the Romans anent the reasonableness and necessity of subjection unto Magistrates, nothing could be more serviceable than the description he now gave of them; while it manifests how wholesome, valuable and necessary are the purposes of their institution and true administration; wherewith alone subjection properly concurs: And his confining himself, at present, unto this description,—was a very fit mean for getting a due regard unto their office, and unto them in their true possession and exercise thereof, so rivetted upon the minds of these *Romans*; as it might not be extinguished by, but overbalance any temptation they could be under,—to refuse them due obedience, on account of what gross evils they were otherways chargeable with.

(3.) It is evident that while the Apostle discourses, in the present case, about Magistrates purely as such,—without noticing any thing good or bad anent their private character and qualifications, moral or religious; or anent their Mal-administrations: his design was to let the Romans see, that however deep a concern they otherways had with them, in these personal respects; yet, in the case of subjection unto their lawful commands, they were to abstract from all consideration of them except as such,—or as truly possessing and exercising civil power; confining themselves unto this view of them altogether.

(4.) At the same time the manner of the Apostle's argument was calculated for discovering unto the Romans—
the

the whole cases wherein they had any concern with Magistrates by way of subjection, *viz*, in so far only as they answer the characters here given : And it was farther calculated, for cautioning the Romans against carrying subjection the length of any sinful compliance with them. For as, in the matter of subjection, the Romans had ado only with the true concerns of their public office : So whatever personal evils they were chargeable with,—whether in their private character or conduct, or in their Mal-administrations (as the evils thereof cannot cleave unto their office but their persons) ; all these they were to oppose, contend and testify against ;—according to their callings, knowledge and access. And the Apostle not only leaves room for all this, but implicitly holds out the necessity thereof ; while he prescribes and admits of no compliance with them, save in the cases expressed.

And now it is altogether evident that, in the reasons of subjection (vers. 1.—4. 6.) the Apostle is so far from contradicting or darkening the command of subjection unto the *higher powers* (vers. 1. 5. 7.), as immediately respecting the *Roman* powers or Magistrates of his day,—by advancing any thing that was not applicable to them ; that on the contrary, by these reasons and what is advanced therein,—he notably explains, illustrates and establishes that command, in reference to these powers ; So as he could not have discoursed thereanent in any shape more suitable and pat to the purpose.

Moreover when the Apostle charged and perswaded the Christians in Rome—to subject themselves unto the Roman Magistrates ; he thereby obliged them to conclude, not only that all other Christians and people in the Roman Empire were bound unto the same thing ; but also, that *whatever* Magistrates any civil state acknowledged—were to be thus subjected unto throughout the same. For the *Roman* Magistrates could have no title in this case, but what was common unto all these in their several dominions ; nor any better title, in respect to Christians than others : and so the reasons, whereby the Apostle urgeth subjection to the Roman Magistrates, were as pleadable, unto the same extent, in the case of all these other ; as indeed he signifies by the general assertion, *There is no power but*
of

of God. Accordingly, when the rule of duty that has been insisted on was specially directed unto all the Christians in Rome; it was also (in the general nature and essential design of Holy Scripture) given forth as a rule of duty unto all Christians in the world: Plainly teaching that all men, but they especially, ought to be subject, not only for wrath but also for conscience sake,—unto all Magistrates presently acknowledged by the civil state they belong to; and that in every lawful administration: As, at the same time, they are bound to contend and testify against all the corruptions and evils, private or public, wherewith any of these Magistrates are chargeable; and that according to their callings, knowledge and access. Now this is all and no more than what the Presbytery affirms, with respect to the present Civil Government; as plainly taught in this passage of the Epistle to the *Romans*,

ARGUMENT V. *From Tit. iii. 1.*

THE fifth precept that shall be improved for the establishment of this principle, is expressed *Tit. iii. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey Magistrates; to be ready to every good work.*

It is quite undeniable that, in these words, the Apostle strictly charges *Titus* to inculcate or press upon the Christians then in *Crete*,—the duty of universal subjection and obedience, only in matters lawful, unto Magistrates who then were in the *Roman* empire.

1. They, upon whom he is charged to inculcate the duty of subjection and obedience, were the Christians then in *Crete*; for it was among them that *Titus* laboured in the work of the gospel, and them only could he now put in mind.

2. He is charged to press upon them the duty of universal subjection and obedience, only in lawful matters; for this is plainly the amount of being subject and obeying, in a way of readiness unto *every good work*: Which is a thing quite different from, and opposite unto any sinful compliances.

3. He is charged to inculcate upon them the duty of such subjection and obedience, unto Magistrates who then were in the *Roman* empire, For it is expressly *Magistrates*, whom

whom the Apostle points out as the objects of this duty: And it must be these also whom he calls *principalities* and *powers*, seeing (beside some reasons advanced to this purpose on *Rom. xiii. 1.*), it is self-evident,—that the civil subjection and obedience here intended, being actually the same, cannot have different objects. Again, it is not so much as supposable that, at this time, either *Paul* should intend, or *Titus* press, or they should practise subjection and obedience,—unto any Magistrates, but such as then were: And, as these *Cretians* belonged to the *Roman* empire; the Magistrates in that empire, then being, must needs be specially respected in the charge here given to *Titus*.

How deep a concern the Apostle entertained and recommends to *Titus*, anent the up-stirring of these Christians unto subjection and obedience, in matters lawful, to the foresaid Magistrates,—is evident at the first reading of this text: And as the same runs parallel unto, and confirms the whole interpretation of the other passage [*Rom. xiii. 1. &c.*]; so, for such reasons as are thereupon advanced, it must be understood as equally applicable unto all people,—with reference to *whatever* Magistrates are over them, by consent of the Civil State they belong to. Upon the whole, it is undeniable,—that *Paul* here charges *Titus* to teach and preach that very same principle, which this Presbytery maintain with reference to the present Civil Government.

ARGUMENT VI. From 1 Pet. ii. 13,—17.

THE last *Precept* that shall be argued from to this purpose, is exhibited by the Apostle *Peter*. As he takes notice (2 Epist. iii. 16.) that, in *Paul's* Epistles, there are *some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned, and unstable, wrest*: So he takes care to prevent this, particularly in respect of the passages that have been considered; while he gives notable explication and confirmation thereunto, by what is expressed 1 Epist. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

What is spoken in these verses, to the present case, hath been mostly met with already; all that needs to be said farther, shall be comprehended in the remarks following.

1. That

1. That the Apostle is here speaking immediately of *persons* in power,—particularly such as then were, or could then be submitted unto; cannot be refused, without an open contradiction unto and contempt of holy Scripture.

2. He gives an infallible, and the only habile mark, whereby to know what persons in power were *ordained of God*; while he teaches (ver. 13.) That all those who are the *ordinance of man*, or who have a constitution by the consent of civil society, are to be submitted unto *for the Lord's sake*,—or, as having an institution from him.

3. What is to be understood [*Rom. xiii. 1. and Tit. iii. 1.*] is here expressed, *viz.* a distinction of these persons in power, or Magistrates, into *supreme* and *subordinate*, ver. 13, 14. The *King* is *supreme* (a word of the same derivation and meaning with *Sovereign*, as they can differ only in sound and grammatical construction,—both signifying, in this case, the Chief Civil Magistrate); while *Governors* are *sent* by him, and so subordinate unto him.

4. He determines the whole matter in respect of which they were to be submitted unto, *viz. The punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well*, ver. 14. However seldom they were inclined or employed this way,—yet the supreme power of the King, and the commission of Governors, could morally extend no farther: And thus it was only in so far as employed this way, that the King was to be considered *as supreme*—and Governors *as sent by him*; and both submitted to accordingly.

5. The Apostle plainly supposes [ver. 15.], that Christians were then charged with non-submission to the King and Governors; though but ignorantly by foolish men, probably because they refused sinful compliances: He therefore informs them of the will of God,—That, notwithstanding their Christian freedom, they should put these persons to silence; by outshining them in submission as to well-doing. And he gives a notable enforcement unto this duty, by telling [ver. 16.], That in neglecting the same (on however specious pretences),—they would not be using their Christian liberty *as the servants of God, but for a cloak of maliciousness*; or, to palliate some venom of their own spirits.

6. He

6. He orders them to yield such submission, without farther question, to *every* ordinance of man ; every person in civil office by the will of society. And,

7. That he might prevent their scrupling to do so, on account of the unworthiness or wickedness of any of these persons ; he teaches,—That submission to them in *well-doing*, or in matters lawful, should be studied for the *Lord's sake*. If they were to look no higher than the persons of these men, their hearts might readily become quite alienated from any actual connection with them : But it was necessary they should look up unto, and reverence *God's institution* in the office these persons bore ; and his sovereign will in chusing to make any use of them, for maintaining any thing of public order that was to be found in the world. And thus, being weaned from their own spirits, and walking in self-denial,—they behoved to cherish any thing just in the Civil Administration ; by submitting thereunto, from the powerful consideration of their being obtestated to do this much for the *Lord's sake* : Yea to do it *heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men* ; while this can no way interfere with a due Testimony against prevailing evils, or with due endeavours for reformation.

Finally, What the Apostle here said unto the Christians of his day, doth equally agree unto the case of all ; with respect to *whatever* Magistrates are sustained by the civil body whereof they are members : And this is all that the Presbytery affirms in the present case.

And now it fully appears, what is the harmonious and indubitable verdict of Scripture-*precepts*, upon the question in debate, *viz.* That all persons, and particularly the Lord's people, ought to render subjection and obedience in all matters lawful, unto any Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged as such by the Civil State they belong to ; being what is every way consistent, yea connected with due faithfulness, in reference to these corruptions wherewith the Magistrates may be chargeable.

The clearest evidence hath been given, that this duty (which was, upon the matter, originally taught by the fifth Commandment), was also, by some precepts branched out therefrom, expressly inculcated upon the *Jewish* people from one generation to another ; and even after they were

were incorporated with the *Roman State*: Yea moreover, that besides the continued doctrine of these precepts, the *Holy Ghost* has been more especially at pains by some others,—for preventing any transgression, neglect or forgetfulness of this duty among *Christians*. And as that principle which the *Presbytery* here asserts, consisteth merely in a particular maintenance of this duty; it is sufficiently manifest, that the said principle only maintains a duty which is expressly taught by *Scripture-precepts*: Yea, that singular care has been, all along, taken in *Scripture*,—for keeping this principle alive, in the faith and practice of the *Lord's people*.

ARGUMENT VII. *From the Conformity of the Precepts insisted on, with other Scriptures.*

AFTER all, it is affecting and astonishing, to see any opposition made unto such an open and special design of the *Holy Ghost* in *Scripture*; and that under a profession of regard to these holy oracles. The *precepts* which have been insisted upon speak so expressly, so certainly, so loudly, according to the interpretation that has been given of them,—plainly remonstrating against any other; that there is no manner of room left for hesitating thereanent,—even though a person should remain diffculted, in apprehending the consistency thereof with any other passages of *Scripture*.

But so it is, that no necessity hereof can occur; unless a person will procure it unto himself. For,

I. In the first place, there is no passage of *Scripture* that so much as seems openly inconsistent with these precepts, as now interpreted; while no passage so much as seems openly to forbid what is here expressly commanded, or to command any thing directly opposite thereunto. And it must be a very intolerable abuse of *Scripture*, to attempt warding off the notable light and force of these precepts,—by passages that do not so much as seem directly opposite or contradictory; while, even though they did so, they ought to be explained in an agreeableness to such direct and indubitable precepts. But,

II. In the next place, as there are many other passages of *Scripture* plainly homologating these precepts, in the

genuine sense that has been assigned them ; so there are none which it is not very obvious, that accordingly they are noways inconsistent with. If there were any, they behoved to ly,—either among approved *examples*, or *doctrines*, or *precepts*, or *promises*, or *threatenings* ; some way related to the general subject in hand : But none such can there be found. For,

1. There are no approved *examples*, in the conduct of civil members towards Magistrates,—whereof these precepts, as now stated, offer to disapprove.

2. Again, there are *doctrines* and *precepts*, expressly or implicitly determining the duty of a Civil State,—as to what sort of Magistrates they should set up and seek after ; and there are some imitable *examples* recorded, of faithfulness and reformation this way : All which doctrines, precepts and examples are here uncontroverted ; in full agreeableness to what has been affirmed. And it is very obvious, that the above *precepts*, in their foresaid genuine sense, are noways inconsistent therewith. For, as these precepts do plainly enjoin different duties upon different objects ; teaching us separately to yield separate obedience, only in matters lawful, to whatever Magistrates the Civil State actually sustains ; so whatever defects in or defections from their duty foresaid, the State be otherways chargeable with,—it is plain such obedience only homologates that part of their said duty which they perform : While we are, at the same time, left indispensibly bound and evidently free to exert ourselves, by all habile means, in testifying against these their evils ; and for getting them convinced of, and reconciled unto the whole extent of their duty, in this matter.

In the next place, there are *doctrines* and *precepts*, expressly or implicitly determining the qualifications and duties of Magistrates,—as to what they should be and do ; and there are some imitable *examples* recorded, of singular attainments this way : All which doctrines, precepts and examples are here also uncontroverted ; in full agreeableness to what has been affirmed. And it is also very obvious, that the above *precepts*, in their foresaid genuine sense, are noways inconsistent therewith. For,

(1.) As

(1.) As these precepts do plainly speak to different persons, and anent different things; so, on the one hand, the passages holding forth these qualifications and duties of Magistrates do not, by the remotest hint, imply,—That if any way they be deficient in or make defection from the same, their authority and commands, even in matters lawful, must not be subjected unto and obeyed: And, on the other hand, these precepts holding forth the duties of subjects, as above stated,—do never, by the remotest consequence, imply any dispensing with those qualifications and duties of Magistrates, or any countenancing of their defects and defections; but, on the contrary, they leave us bound and in full room, to testify against the same,—and essay their reformation, by all methods that are habile for us. As,

(2.) Magistrates are here always supposed to be in the actual and due possession of these needful and natural abilities, which are common among men. Again, they are here always supposed to be actually possessing and performing these moral and acquired qualifications which they ought to have, and these duties which are incumbent upon them; at least, in some useful and continued degree: For all this is always in Scripture, and by all people, implied in the essential notion of Magistrates.

Therefore it is only in respect of the DUE Measure and Performance of these qualifications and duties, that Magistrates can be understood as at any time chargeable with defects or defections. Now this is indeed such, as without having attained and engaging unto the same, at least in some hopeful and promising way,—no Civil State ought to invest any with magistracy. But then, SUCH a Measure and Performance of these qualifications and duties—cannot be required for the BEING of the Magistrate's office; either as *essential* to it, or as a condition of it *sine qua non*. First, it cannot be required as essential thereunto: For then it would be the same thing with magistracy,—which is grossly absurd and big with absurdities. In the next place, it cannot be required as a condition thereof *sine qua non*; or without which one is not really a Magistrate, however far sustained as such by civil society: For then no person could be really a Magistrate, unless he
were

were so faultlessly. And this is a proposition (which Mr *Nairn's* scheme necessarily lands in, if it come to any thing at all, and) which is so very dangerous,—that it opens a door for throwing off all relative duties, toward any that are not faultless in their relative capacity. By this way of reasoning, it will follow,—that servants are not to obey their masters, while undutiful: Though yet the Spirit of God says (1 *Pet.* ii. 18.), *Servants be subject to your masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.*

It is manifest, therefore, that the due measure and performance of scriptural qualifications and duties,—belongs not to the *being* and *validity* of the Magistrate's office; but to the *WELL-BEING* and *Usefulness* thereof. But an acknowledgment of the Magistrate's authority in lawful commands, doth only homologate the being and validity of his office, while sustained by the State: Wherefore this acknowledgment can never be inconsistent with the necessity of these qualifications and duties; can never palliate any defects in or defections from the same; and can never encroach upon the necessity or due extent of testifying against these defects or defections, and of essaying the reformation of Magistrates in our several places and callings.

3. Farther, there are, in Scripture,—several *promises* of good, reformed, reforming Magistrates; and of deliverance to the Lord's people from any grievance they presently ly under, in the want thereof: But these promises can never belong to the rule of duty. A promise of the greatest future good, can be no warrant for spurning at the least present good: Yea, the cherishing any good which is presently bestowed, is the ready way of attaining all the good that is promised. Wherefore no promise anent Magistrates to come, can possibly interfere with the duty of subjecting to any thing lawful in the administration of Magistrates that presently are.

4. Finally, there are *threatenings* and *curses* pronounced against wicked Magistrates; and people concurring with them in their wickedness: But it is dreadful to suppose, that these are any way inconsistent with the duty toward Magistrates now pled for; as if God's indignation against
sinners,

sinners, did dissolve the obligation of relative duties betwixt them.

According to the observations that have been made, it will appear,—that no passage of Scripture doth in the remotest manner militate against the cause now managed. And now it is abundantly manifest,—That the principle which the Presbytery holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain a duty that is expressly taught by *Scripture-precepts*.

PROOF II. *From Scripture-Examples.*

THE Presbytery next proceed to declare, that,—The principle here asserted is likewise plainly held forth unto us by approved *Scripture-examples*, that are perpetually imitable. A condescending upon the multitude of particular instances that might be produced here, would swell vastly beyond the present design. It shall only be remarked, That,

I. The *Old Testament* history gives abundant and illustrious evidence to the matter in hand. For,

1. There cannot so much as one instance be found in all that history,—of any civil members refusing, either by word or deed, an acknowledgment of or subjection unto the authority and lawful commands of any Magistrate actually in office by will of the civil body; in a way of testifying against their defects or defections: And no examples, unless precisely of this kind, can in the least militate against the principle now defended. Wherefore,

To argue, in this case, from the example of conspiracies against the lives,—or of rejecting, in a way of open wickedness, the authority of Kings; would be both absurd and dreadful.

Moreover, there is an example of testifying against the politic body; in their undue choice of a King: As in the case of *Jotham*, Judg. ix. There is an example of testifying against, and withstanding the apostasy and wickedness of Kings: As in the case of *Elisha* [2 Kings iii. 14, 15.]; and of the *Priests*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16,—20. There is an example of flying, for due self preservation; as in the

the case of *Jotham* [Judg. ix. 21.]: Of resisting, for just self-defence; as in the case of *Elisba* (2 Kings vi. 32.): And of espousing the just cause of the persecuted; as in the case of those who stood with *David* against *Saul*. Again, there is an example of one King casting off the yoke of another; as in the case of *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings xviii. 7. There is an example of the people's doing justice to their rightful and injured King, against an usurping murderer; as in the case of *Joash*, 2 Kings xi. 11.—16. There is an example of the people's submitting to the King's son,—when the father was confined however to a separate house, according to the Ceremonial Law; as in the case of *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. Finally, there is an example of the people's suspending a King from human government,—during the time that God's judgment suspended him, however, from human society; as in the case of *Nebuchadnezzar*.—But it is evident at first view, that none of these examples (whether approved and imitable, or not) do any ways touch the present question.

What seems nearest the doing so, is the example of *simple revolts*: As from *Rehoboam* [2 Chron. x. 16.]; from *Jeroboam* [2 Chron. xi. 13.—17.]; from *Baasha* [2 Chron. xv. 9.]; and from *Jehoram*, 2 Chron. xxi. 10. Now there is no occasion here to controvert any of these examples; nor any need to enquire in what cases simple revolts are lawful, or in what not: For however this be, they are of a nature entirely distinct from the subject now in hand. The whole nature of any simple revolt, lies in breaking off immediately from the civil body; by withdrawing from, or withdrawing part of their territories: And then it necessarily follows, at the same time, that these revoltors break off from the head of this civil body; without ever denying his authority over the members who still cleave unto the same.—And this is the precise nature of all these examples presently referred to. For we have not the remotest hint, that such as revolted from the foresaid Kings, by breaking off from the civil body wherein these Kings ruled,—did ever deny the obligation of their authority upon such as staid behind; or ever took up any testimony against any who staid behind, for subjecting unto any thing lawful in the administration of these Kings. And
it

it would be very ridiculous to argue, from a supposition of its being the duty of such as no more belonged to the Civil Body—to disown all authority of rulers therein ; that therefore, it was the duty of such as still belonged to that body to do the same. Thus, the above examples can be no precedent for some few, still continuing members of the civil body (which they cannot but do, as long as living intermixed therewith), to refuse subjection in matters lawful to any Sovereign whom that body still sustains. So that, upon the whole, no example (whether approved and imitable, or not) in the least favouring that anti-government scheme now by some espoused, can be found throughout the history of the *Old Testament*. But,

2. It is obvious, even in a cursory perusal of that sacred history ; that, during all the periods thereof, it was the general and constant practice of the Lord's people,—to live in subjection and obedience to the authority of whatever Kings were acknowledged by the civil body whereof they were members, and that in any lawful administration. And this their practice in the kingdom of *Judah*, did not arise from any extraordinary obligation they were under to the royal line of *David* ; as is evident, particularly from their behaving after the same manner in the kingdom of *Israel*. Yea it is manifest that, before they were formed into a nation, they lived in the above sort of subjection and obedience unto the Kings of *Egypt* ; and that they did so likewise to the *Babylonish* Kings, when afterwards scattered in captivity through their Empire.

3. This practice was never, at any time, charged upon the Jewish people as a sin. It is true indeed, that the body politic did sin very grievously ; in the manner, time and circumstances of desiring that their government should be changed into a monarchical form : And for this they are expressly condemned ; 1 *Sam.* viii. 7, 8. and x. 19. As also, upon this account, the Lord gave them a King in his anger [*Hos.* xiii. 11.] ; or they so provoked him, that he then withheld the special and distinguishing blessing wherewith they would otherwise have got a King. Moreover, we find that the body politic were condemned for the frequent and hainous sin, of not consulting the Lord in making choice of their Kings ; while he complained (*Hos.* viii. 4.), *They have set up Kings, but not by me ;*
they

they have made Princes, and I knew it not. But it would be dreadful to infer from these passages, that Kingly Government itself, in the form and authority thereof,—was condemned, or inflicted as a judgment : seeing the Lord gave special directions and encouragement thereanent [Deut. xvii. 14.—20.] ; special orders for *Samuel*, to give actual compliance with the people's desire thereof, (*viz.* as to the matter though not the manner of their desire, 1 Sam. viii. 7. 9) ; seeing also he gave special approbation thereunto, by an extraordinary choice of some Kings for them ;—and not only vouchsafed to give them some special promises anent Kings, but likewise threatned them with the want of Kings as a special judgment, Hos. iii. 4.

Moreover, though we read of wicked Kings, who had wicked reigns,—in *Judah* and *Israel*, as well as in *Egypt* and *Babylon* ; and though the Lord did, from time to time, send forth Prophets,—with a special commission for causing the people of *Judah* and *Israel* to *know their abominations*, yea for shewing them *all their abominations* ; particularly, as to what was at any time amiss, in their setting up and complying with Kings : Yet there can no instance be produced, of any among that people being at any time condemned,—for yielding subjection and obedience in matters lawful, unto the worst of these Kings who ruled over them by the will of the civil body whereunto they at any time, belonged ; whether in their own land or elsewhere : Or, which is the same thing,—it cannot be found that ever they were blamed ; because a testimony against the wickedness of any Kings they continued to live under, was never carried the length of disowning and disobeying their authority,—even in lawful administrations. Yea,

4. The practice of owning and obeying the authority of all these Kings, in such circumstances,—was what the Jewish people were, all along, encouraged unto and countenanced in ; by the example of Prophets and eminent servants of God. *David*, even when wickedly persecuted by *Saul*, and lawfully providing for his own safety,—did utter and frequently repeat an express and humble acknowledgment of his office and authority ; 1 Sam. xxiv and xxvi. Afterwards the *Prophets*, both in *Judah* and *Israel*,

Israel, when speaking anent or unto the Kings who reigned there,—did always acknowledge or homologate their office and authority: So that, amidst all the faithfulness and freedom of speech they ever used, in testifying against the wickedness of any of these Kings,—and of such as sinfully complied with them; they never gave the people the least ground to question their office and authority, in any just administrations;—but, on the contrary, their behaviour was calculated for preventing any the least suspicion thereanent; and for confirming the people in due obedience to the same.

And it is especially remarkable to this purpose, that, as the Prophet *Elijah* sustained the office and authority of *Ahab* over the people [*1 Kings* xviii. 19.]; so (when the hand of the Lord was on him) he *honoured Ahab* before the people [vers. 46.]: And all this, notwithstanding of what is said, Chap. xvi. 30, — 33. and Chap. xviii. 18. And also, that the Prophet *Jeremiah* did expressly own the office and authority of *Zedekiah* [*Jer.* xxxvii. 20.]; even though this King was lying under the wicked character and woful curse, which are declared, *2 Kings* xxiv. 19, 20. *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 12, 13. and *Ezek.* xvii. 13. — 21. Moreover, when the seed of *Israel* sojourned in *Egypt*; they were encouraged unto and countenanced in an acknowledgment of the Egyptian Kings, by the example of *Joseph*. And afterwards, when they were carried captive into the country of *Babylon*; as the letter sent by *Jeremiah* (Chap. xxix. 4—7.) did imply a call for them to sit down under the wings of Civil Government in that country, and to yield obedience unto any lawful administration thereof, (by which call, to alledge that God dispensed for a time with his own law, is blasphemous): So they were, all along, countenanced in and encouraged unto this practice,—by the examples of *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Misbael*, *Azariah*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Mordecai* and *Esther*; who enjoyed places under, or received commissions from the Babylonian and Persian Monarchs. Nor can it any way prejudice the present argument, to alledge that the above-mentioned persons were extraordinary: For as they had no extraordinary warrant for the foresaid practice; so therein they were imitated by all the rest of the people,—

who could not all be extraordinary persons, and were never charged with any error in this matter.

II. It is now time to remark, that though the *New-Testament* (agreeably to its nature and design) doth not profess to lay before us any formed course of civil transactions ; it nevertheless affords evidence that, in the days of our *Lord* and his *Apostles*,—the general and approved practice, relative unto the principle now maintained, continued to run in the same channel as before.

It would be superfluous to prove, that the *Jewish* people, who had before this time been subdued,—had also by this time submitted themselves unto the Roman Emperors ; accepting protection from, and yielding obedience to their government. And, with reference to *Christians* in this period, it may be noticed that,

1. The Apostle *Paul*, conform to his own doctrine,—did acknowledge, honour and submit unto the authority of the *Roman* Magistrates, supreme and subordinate. He acknowledged *Felix* for a judge unto the Jewish nation ; so as he protested cheerfulness, in answering for himself before him, *Acts* xxiv. 10. He stood before the judgment-seat of *Festus*, pleading that he had not offended any thing against *Cæsar*, *Acts* xxv. 8. He thought himself happy, in having access to answer for himself before King *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 1. And downwards in that chapter it appears, what honour he put upon *Festus* and *Agrippa* before the people.—Moreover, when pleading that he ought to be judged at the judgment-seat of *Cæsar*, he actually appealed unto *Cæsar*, *Acts* xxv. 10, 11. By which deed, according to the very nature of it,—he plainly acknowledged *Cæsar's* office and authority ; and that before the people. And, as no sort of constraint could have warranted such a deed, had it been any way in itself sinful ; so the constraint he was under in this case, was what the nature of an appeal supposes, *viz.* a moral constraint, which not only allows but requires that the action be voluntary.

Nor do the Apostle's doctrine and practice, as above declared, bear the smallest inconsistency with what he writes, 1 Cor. vi. 1—8. For that which the Apostle there in some cases condemns [*viz. pursuits at law*], is a thing entirely distinct from civil subjection : Seeing, though

though in these pursuits the Magistrate is acknowledged as such, yet they are no part of subjection to him : So that a person may always continue subject to civil commands, without ever turning a pursuer before civil courts ; and, where subjection is a great duty, such pursuits may be a gross sin. Thus, in a perfect consistency with all the civil subjection now defended, it always continues to be *utterly a fault*, especially among Christians of a sound profession,—to entertain an unbrotherly, impatient and litigious behaviour ; in going to law, or seeking decision of matters before civil courts, especially where the Magistrate is chargeable with infidelity or difference in religion : Without first using habile endeavours to have these matters decided in a way of private arbitration ; and without rather taking wrong, or suffering themselves to be defrauded,—where it appears more agreeable to the principles of Christianity, and more for the credit thereof, to do so.

2. The Apostle's exhortation, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. *That first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made—for Kings and for all that are in authority*, (as indeed they could not pray and give thanks for any but such as then were) ; *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty* ;—plainly supposes, that Christians were already beyond question about the office of these persons ; whence, their endeavouring to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (which is also supposed), behoved to include subjection and obedience to these powers in matters lawful. Yea,

3. That such ought to be and actually was the general practice of Christians in this period, is farther manifested and clearly homologated [2 Pet. ii. 10. *Jude*, vers. 8.] ; by the open condemnation of some wicked persons, in despising and speaking evil of dignified persons, or Civil Governors who ruled over them : As an application of these passages unto civil misdemeanors, cannot be evited or evaded ; and it was impossible that these persons could despise and speak evil of Civil Government, without extending such behaviour unto Civil Governors then in being.

What have been pled—are plain examples of yielding subjection and obedience, in matters lawful, to whatever Magistrates are acknowledged by the Civil State. These examples,

examples, when compared together, do carry along an evidence of approbation ; but this is farther put beyond all doubt, by the concurring voice of these precepts that have been unfolded.—And now it is abundantly manifest, that the principle which the Presbytery holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain an imitation of approved scripture *examples* ; and is therefore plainly held forth unto us by the same.

PROOF III. *From the perpetual Obligation and Imitableness of the Precepts and Examples insisted on.*

THAT these *examples* are perpetually *imitable*, would admit of separate proof ; as approved Scripture-examples have the force of precepts unto us, in like circumstances. But no ground of doubt can remain here, if the precepts already explained, whereunto these examples correspond, be found of perpetual obligation.

That these *precepts* are of *perpetual obligation*, was asserted in entering upon the consideration thereof. And this was likewise evidenced, in finding all along,—that these precepts do properly enjoin obedience, in matters lawful, upon all persons ; unto any Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged by the Civil State they belong to : As this is a general institution that, in the nature of the thing, cannot be limited by places,—times, or whatsoever transactions.

However, it may not be improper to subjoin here some farther evidence, that these precepts are of perpetual obligation. As,

I. Though Magistrates may differ vastly,—as to their qualifications, their faithfulness, their usefulness, and the blessing of God upon their government ; yet the precepts already explained are a rule of duty,—equally toward any who are, and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates, by civil society. Nothing needs be added for the clearing of this, but an overthrow of a distinction that has been made ; of those who are acknowledged as Magistrates by civil society,—into such as are so by the *preceptive* will of God, and such as are so by his *providential* will only. Now as, by this distinction, these Magistrates are considered

ed with respect to the origin of that office which they actually bear ; so a distinction of them, in this respect, into *preceptive* and *providential*,—is altogether groundless and absurd. It will not be refused, that all such preceptive Magistrates are also providential ; seeing it is the hand of Providence that brings every thing to pass : But moreover, all providential Magistrates are also preceptive ; and that equally, in the above respect. That the conduct of all these may be very far from agreeing equally unto the precept, is granted ; and in a perfect consistency with all that is here maintained : But the office and authority of them all, in itself considered,—does equally arise from, and agree unto the preceptive will of God. For

The *institution* of Civil Magistrates is altogether by the preceptive will of God, as *the supreme Lord and King of all the world* : While, if the Magistrate derived his office properly from Christ *as Mediator*,—then it could not fail to be an evangelical, and so an erastian office. But, in opposition hereto, the kingdom of Christ is not of this world ; though a right to have the kingdoms of this world rendered subservient and tributary to his spiritual kingdom in the visible Church, belongs to him as Mediator : And so, in subserviency to his mediatory kingdom,—the management of the kingdom of Providence, throughout the whole world, was put into the hands of Zion's King, *Eph. i. 22, 23. Matth xxviii. 18.* Moreover (besides what hath been said on *Rom. xiii. 1.* and *1 Pet. ii. 13.*) seeing the constitution of all Governments and Governors in the world contains, at least, a piece of order ; it is strange to say, that the least order in the world is merely by the providential will of God,—and so merely by permission : While the voice of all reason and religion proclaims, that all order in the world is by the efficiency of God,—who is the God of order, and not of confusion ; and so in an agreeableness to his preceptive will.

II. As the precepts that have been explained are a rule of duty, equally toward any who are and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates by civil society ; so they are and continue a rule of duty in this matter, particularly to all the Lord's people,—in all periods, places and cases. For moral precepts, according to their very nature, continue

tinue always indispensable and actually binding ; where there is the least occasion for obeying them. And as the word of God is delivered to us for a compleat and perpetual rule, not only of faith but of manners ; so there is not the least hint in all Scripture,—that ever a time should come, or a case fall out, wherein the above precepts should not be a present rule : Nor is there any other sort of rule in all Scripture to walk by, in the matter of civil subjection and obedience ; so that, if we reject the use of that rule, we reject all rule in the matter. Moreover, it is most absurd to suppose,—that the apostasy of King or people can render *that* civil obedience of a nature morally evil, which otherways would have been of a nature morally good. Apostasy is a heinous aggravation of sin, but it can never alter the nature of moral good and evil.

For the farther understanding of all this, it must be remembered,—that the right of a people to set up Civil Government, and chuse Magistrates unto themselves, is not a positive right ; flowing immediately from the divine favour, approbation, or gospel-grace : But it is a natural moral right ; flowing from the universal sovereignty of God, and the obligation of his eternal law : And thus it is a right that can never be forfeited in this world, unless men could forfeit their subjection to the law of God. Again, this moral obligation to set up Government and Governors, is morally incumbent upon the body of a people : And so their right to set up Government and Governors, is what they cannot forfeit by any wickedness ; unless they could forfeit subjection to God. Moreover, our living freely intermixed with any politic body—doth necessarily bring us under a moral and indispensable tie unto civil communion with them ; wherefore, while so living, we can never refuse this without refusing subjection to God : And this civil communion with them, as it can never respect any things but what are lawful,—can never involve us in any national guilt, apostasy or corruption.

The argument from Scripture *precepts* and *examples* has now proceeded so far, as may render it abundantly evident,—That the principle which the Presbytery here affirms, with respect to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the *plain tenor* of Scripture. But moreover,

ARTICLE II. *The Agreeableness of the Presbytery's Judgment to the Principles of all the reformed Churches.*

THE Presbytery's Principle anent the present Civil Government, as above declared and defended, is agreeable to *the principles of all the reformed Churches*; and particularly of *this Church in her Confession and Covenants*.

In passing forward unto the proof of this proposition it will not be improper to remark; That as the *primitive Church*, from the days of the Apostles unto the end of the third century, continued to have ado with *heathen Magistrates*; from whose hands she underwent such a tract of hardships, sufferings and deaths, for the name of Jesus,—as allowed her but seldom or short breathings: So the singular holiness, meekness, patience, faithfulness, zeal and courage wherewith Christians did then adhere unto and persevere in the profession of their faith,—detesting the least sinful compliance, and disdaining the greatest favours that could be thereby purchased; gave an ample testimony against the corruption and wickedness of these civil powers, and of the generations who therein concurred with them. But it cannot be found that ever any of these Christians impugned or disobeyed the office or authority of any such Magistrates, in any lawful administrations; while sustained by the civil body: And what institutions the antient *Fathers* delivered, as to this case, we have a taste of,—in what of the same is cited by the reformed Church of *Bohemia* [in chap. xvi. of her Confession], viz “If the master command these things
“ that are not contrary to the holy Scriptures, let the
“ servant be subject to the master:—If it be good
“ which the Emperor commandeth, do the will of him
“ that commandeth; if it be evil, answer, We ought rather to obey God than men.”

The sound doctrine here taught (being the very same with what is now defended), was retained and maintained by the famous Churches of the Reformation from Popery. And,

P R O O F

PROOF I. *From the Principles of the Foreign reformed Churches.*

THIS is evident, with reference to all these Churches beyond sea. None of them ever manifested the least deviation from ancient doctrine in the present matter: And, when the pestilent sectary of *Anabaptists* arose in *Germany*; some rejecting Magistracy, some Magistrates,—all under pretences of greater reformation; sundry of these Churches (in their Confessions of Faith) expressly managed a Testimony against them in so doing: As particularly the Church of *Basil* [Conf. art. xi.] condemn such their principles; under the notion of *strange and erroneous doctrines, which turbulent or mobish spirits do bring forth.*

But, more particularly, the principle now affirmed is plainly agreeable to what was maintained by the reformed Church of *Helvetia* [in her latter Confession of Faith, chap. xxx.], viz, “The Magistrate, of what sort soever, “is ordained of God himself for the peace and quietness “of mankind; and so that he ought to have the chief “place in the world. If he be an adversary to the “Church, he can hinder and disturb it much: But if he “be a friend, and so a member of the Church; he is a “most useful and excellent member thereof, who can be “very profitable and excellently helpful unto her.— “Let all the subjects honour and reverence the Magistrate, as the Minister of God: Let them love him, favour him, and pray for him, as for a father; let them “also obey all his just and equitable commands: Finally, “let them pay customs and tributes, and all other duties “of this sort, faithfully and willingly.” And it is to be remembered, that this Confession was approved by several other reformed Churches; particularly by these of *Geneva, Savoy, Poland, Hungary and Scotland.*

Again, the principle now asserted is likewise plainly agreeable to what was taught in the reformed Church of *Bohemia* (as laid open by her Confession, chap. xvi.), viz, “It is taught here with us, according to the scriptures,— “That the higher power, or the Civil Magistrate, is the “ordinance of God; or governing the people in these things

“ things which are political and temporary.—They
 “ teach likewise, That it is commanded by the word of
 “ God ; that all persons be subject to the higher powers
 “ in all things, providing they be not contrary to God
 “ and his word : First indeed to your Royal Majesty” (*viz.*
the German Emperor) ; “ and next unto whatsoever o-
 “ thers are placed in authority,—whether they be good,
 “ or unworthy and evil.”

Such doctrine may be seen more at large, in these *Confessions* : As also in the *former* Confession of *Helvetia* [art. xxvi.] ; in the Confession of *Basil* [art. vi, xi.] ; in the *French* Confession [art. xxxix, xl.] ; in the Confession of *Belgia* [art. xxxvi.] ; in the Confession of *Augsburg* (art. xvi.) ; in the Confession of *Saxony* (art. xxiii.) ; and in the Confession of *Sweeland*, chap. xxiii.

In a word, these reformed Churches,—as they had generally ado with Popish, and sometimes with persecuting powers ; so their Confessions and conduct bore ample testimony against the corruptions and wickedness of these powers, and of the multitudes who therein concurred with them : But (amidst all temptations to the contrary) they were enabled to retain and vindicate the ancient principle anent subjection to Civil Magistrates ; the very principle now affirmed, with reference to the present Civil Government. Moreover,

PROOF II. *From the Principles of the Church of Scotland.*

ARGUMENT I. *From her Principles at the Reformation from Popery.*

THIS same Principle was also plainly retained and maintained by the Church of *Scotland*, at the Reformation from Popery ; as is evident from her approving of the *Helvetick* Confession, above-noticed : And more directly from our *first* Confession of Faith ; as it manifestly speaks to the case of all Civil Governments through the world, in art. xxvi. “ We confess and acknowledge em-
 “ pires, kingdoms, dominions and cities, to be distincted
 “ and ordained by God ; the power and authority in the
 “ same,—be it of Emperors in their empires, of Kings in

“ their realms, Dukes and Princes in their dominions,
 “ and of other Magistrates in the cities.—to be God’s
 “ holy ordinance ; ordained for manifestation of his own
 “ glory, and for the singular profit and commodity of
 “ mankind : So that whosoever goeth about to take a-
 “ way or to confound the whole state of civil policies,
 “ now long established ; we affirm the same men, not on-
 “ ly to be enemies to mankind, but wickedly to fight a-
 “ gainst God’s expressed will. We further confess and
 “ acknowledge, that such persons as ARE placed in au-
 “ thority are to be loved, honoured, feared, and holden
 “ in most reverend estimation.”

ARGUMENT II. *From her Principles at the Reforma-
 tion from Prelacy.*

FARTHER, this same principle was also plainly retained and maintained in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (chap. xxiii. art. 4.), in these words ; [“ Infidelity, or
 “ difference in religion, doth not make void the Magi-
 “ strate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people
 “ from their due obedience to him”] : Which evidently amount to this,—That where a Magistrate hath authority by the will and consent of the body politic (this being what properly renders his authority just and legal, according to the word of God), infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the said authority ; nor free the people from an obligation to obey him in any lawful commands, which is all their due obedience. Now, to vindicate our *Confession of Faith* against the subversion of this passage ; as if (according to Mr Nairn) it were simply to be understood of *a land not reformed, where some that profess the true religion may have their lot and residence* : It must be remarked that,

1. This interpretation says, That the same act of obedience to the same sort of Magistrate, which is morally good in one place, will be morally evil in another ; which is a groundless and absurd imagination.
2. This interpretation charges our reformers with error, in receding from the Scripture doctrine ; as it plainly teacheth, That all Magistrates, every where, acknowledged by civil society, must be obeyed in all lawful commands :

And

And moreover, it charges this Church with retracting her former principles in this matter,—as above declared.

3. The said gloss represents our reformers as awfully and absurdly juggling with God and man; by confessing the faith of others, and not their own;—yea without telling that they did so, or telling what they maintained as the rule of their own practice in this matter: And all this under the solemnity of that Covenant-oath, in pursuance whereof the said Confession was made and maintained.

4. The whole Confession of Faith, and consequently the passage of it now pointed at,—was received by the Church of *Scotland* as truth, and that among us; which appears from the act of *Assembly* (*August 27. 1647. sess. 23.*), bearing this clause: “The General Assembly doth therefore, after mature deliberation, agree unto and approve the said Confession, as to the truth of the matter; and also as to the point of uniformity,—agreeing for our part, that it be a common Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms.” Moreover,

5. It were easy to manifest,—that the foresaid gloss upon the above-cited passage, overturns the connection of the whole 23d chapter of our Confession of Faith. But it is sufficient to notice, that the Magistrate there supposed to be an infidel, or of a different religion,—is, at the same time, plainly supposed to be even where a Christian Church takes place: For, after these words (*nor free the people from their due obedience to him*); it immediately follows, in the same sentence, “From which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.” And this assertion is so general, that it holds out the case to be still the same, and leaves no room for exception; however far the Church and land be otherways reformed.

It is now manifest, that the principle held forth in our *Confession* (chap. xxiii. art. 4.), is the very same with what presently is affirmed by this Presbytery.

As to the principle anent subjection to Civil Government, held forth in our *solemn Covenants* which were sworn and subscribed by all ranks,—it is sufficient here to remember; That as the said Covenants were calculated altogether for maintaining and promoting scriptural and received

ed principles and reformation, both in Church and State: So it is both absurd and injurious to these Covenants,—to suppose that they overturned, in the least, any principles or duties relative to Civil Government; that were antecedently fixed by the word of God, and the law of nature. Yea, as our Confession of Faith, and particularly the fore-mentioned article, was drawn up and espoused in pursuance of and according unto these Covenants; it is therefore undeniable,—that no principle was or could be maintained in the said Covenants, but what is every way consistent with what the Presbytery is now affirming*.

It is now plain enough, that the principle which the Presbytery here affirms is agreeable to the principles of this Church, in her Confession and Covenants. Wherefore, the Anti-government scheme now on foot cannot find the least countenance from our Confession or Covenants; but the contrary: Nor can there be one instance given, of its corresponding unto the principles or conduct of, any in this land,—before the Restoration of King Charles II.

ARGUMENT III. *From her Principles in the late Period of Persecution,*

BUT as little does this scheme any way agree unto, or find any countenance from the principles and conduct of our *sufferers* and *martyrs*; during the woful period betwixt the Restoration and Revolution. It is not required here,—to manifest the agreement betwixt the principles and conduct of these honourable witnesses, and those in the preceeding period. But for vindicating them against the injury which their testimony and memories suffer, by giving out that they were upon the Anti-government scheme

* These Covenants contain an engagement,—“to preserve and defend the King’s Majesty’s person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms:” Which obviously amounts to this,—That our Reformers did thereby swear, that as their main aim was to act in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; so they were resolved to preserve and defend the King’s person and authority, as far as the cause of his person and authority could consist with and be subordinate to that main aim.

scheme now maintained by some ; it will suffice to remark that,

1. The powers whom they rejected did differ, not only as to their administration, but as to their office and kind,—from any we have now ado with. King *Charles II.*, after his restoration,—revoked and rescinded the whole former deed of the body politic, investing him with Magistracy : As instead of holding his office immediately by the will of the body politic ; he, by consent of Parliament, renounced any holding of them,—and (absurdly, against the very essential nature of magistracy) he arrogated a derivation of it from God immediately, *Parl. 1. sess. 1. cap. 5, 15.* According hereunto, beside all his other wickedness, he proceeded in the exercise of an habitual and horrid tyranny ; which came to an unparalleled height, *anno 1681* : When, by act of Parliament, he reimposed a cess upon the whole kingdom, to support a military force ; for suppressing the meetings of the Lord's people, in the public profession of his name and covenanted-cause,—under the odious notion of *sedition and rebellious conventicles* : Whereby the whole land was drawn into a conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ, and against their own rights and privileges as men. And as *James VII* did tread and proceed in his steps ; so it soon appeared, at the Revolution, that their Government had really been a force upon the nation.

2. Our sufferers then were in a quite different situation from any in this period. Not only were they tyrannically imposed upon, to give express acknowledgment of the then authority ; but they were actually cast out from under the wings of all Government, denied all benefit of law, and devoted unto destruction : So that they by no means proceeded ultroneously in their rejecting the Civil Government.

3. The state of their testimony, in rejecting the Civil Government, was entirely different from what some are now taking up. They owned that they neither did, nor could reject the Magistrate, merely for differing from them in religion : And the question with them here was,—“ Whether a people long oppressed with the encroachments of tyrants and usurpers, may disown their pre-
“ tended

“tended authority; and, when imposed upon to acknowledge it, may rather chuse to suffer than to own it *.” Wherefore it is plain, that such a question as is now moved, about disowning the Civil Government, was never under their consideration; nor did they ever give any verdict relative thereunto.

SECTION III. Conclusion of the Whole.

UPON the whole, it is beyond all occasion of controversy,—that the principle now defended by this Presbytery, anent the authority of and subjection to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the *plain tenor of Scripture*; and to *the principles of all the reformed Churches*, particularly of *this Church in her Confession and Covenants*.

Wherefore the *Presbytery did, and hereby do assert and declare*; That we ought to acknowledge the present Civil Authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands. And likewise they did, and hereby do condemn the opposite and dangerous extremes that some have gone into: According to their act passed at *Edinburgh, February 3d 1743*; the tenor whereof follows.

“The Presbytery are of opinion, that in regard they
“had formerly agreed, That it was not suitable to their
“present circumstances,—to blend civil and ecclesiastic
“matters in the oath of God, in renewing the Covenants;
“because that the cognizance of civil affairs belongs not
“properly to them as a Church Judicatory;—and some
“members being of the mind, that the reduplication of
“the Oath upon that clause of the Confession of Sins
“which was the occasion of the dissent, would, upon the
“matter, amount to the foresaid blending; that there-
“fore the said clause shall be left out. Yet, that none
“may misconstrue the principles of the Presbytery on
“the head of the Civil Magistrate; although the national
“apostasy under which the Lord’s remnant through the
“land have been groaning, while our rulers have not on-
“ly neglected but contradicted their duty of espousing
“and

* *Hind let loose*, p. 275. *Informatory Vindication*, printed *Annæ* 1707, p. 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 65, 66. *Mr Renwick’s last speech and testimony, adhering to the Informatory vindication*,

“ and supporting the covenanted principles and reformation of this Church, whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to anger,—be ground of humiliation before the Lord : Yet the Presbytery do hereby condemn the *dangerous extreme* that some have gone into, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands, on account of the want of these qualifications which Magistrates ought to have by the word of God and our Covenants ;—even though they allow ~~in~~ in the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom ; an opinion and practice contrary to the plain tenor of scripture, and to the known principles of this Church in her Confession and Covenants,—and of all other reformed Churches : And that some few others carry their zeal against the defections and evils of the times, to the *dangerous extreme* of espousing principles in favours of propagating religion by offensive arms ; quite contrary to that disposition which ought to be in all the professed followers of Christ, who came not to destroy mens lives but to save them. And likewise the Presbytery agree, That unless the Reverend Mr *Nairn* retract the principles contained in the said Dissent, that tend to overthrow Civil Magistracy ; they will proceed against him according to the rules of this Church.”

Finally, the Presbytery do hereby beseech and obtest all under their inspection, to watch against the snares of this time : Particularly, in setting the duty of testifying against the apostasy and corruption of our rulers and body politic, in opposition to the duty of yielding subjection and obedience to the present Civil Authority over these nations, in lawful commands. It is the special duty of all and every one, to be deeply humbled before the Lord for our grievous apostasy and corruption ; not only in Church, but in State : And to wrestle with the God of *Jacob*, upon the footing of his gracious promise, *Isa. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5.* *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come*

come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof; by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day; and the shining of a flaming fire by night: For upon all the glory shall be a defence.

And agreeably unto this, it is the duty of the Lord's people to adhere unto the standard of a public testimony against corruptions and defections, civil and ecclesiastical; and to observe the divine order in working reformation: So as every one may, through the grace of our Lord Jesus, study personal and family reformation; and at the same time may seek after reformation of the Church, according to the word of God and our Covenants,—as introductory unto reformation in the state; which likeways will natively introduce reformation in places of public power and judgment. Moreover, it is the special duty of all the Lord's people,—to study that their testimony be in meekness and fear, becoming the gospel: And to watch against the dangerous extreme of managing a testimony with bitterness of spirit and speech, particularly against Civil Superiors; *whereas Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord*, 2 Pet. i. 11. Nor, in the present case, can any testimony be managed that the Lord will accept of as true and faithful; without cleaving to the doctrine of his word,—as it unfolds the duty of *submitting to every ordinance of man* in so clear and obvious a light, as leaves no room for any, that look with singleness and fear, to ly in darkness or perplexity thereanent: And without continuing accordingly to walk in the plain footsteps of the Church of Christ in all ages:—That so, when the Lord shall return to these lands, we may be capable of meeting him with the Church's Confession, *Isa. xxvi. 8. In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.*

Extracted—

JOHN POTTS, Pr. Cls.

A P P E N-

APPENDIX I.

CONCERNING the Renovation of our SOLEMN COVENANTS.

PART I.

*The Warrants for Solemn Covenanting, under the New Testament *.*

IT is the case with this, as with every other duty,—That the greatest bar in the way of it, which will be most difficult to get removed, lies in disaffection from it. A disaffected heart will easily find plausible objections; which persons will reckon of sufficient force, just because they would have them to be so: While the strongest arguments for a rational conviction of the duty, will not get any fair hearing. But when this corrupt bias of the heart is rectified, which the Lord only can do; then all the objections which were formerly taken for substance, will appear to be no more than shadows. *Great peace have they which love thy law*, says the Psalmist; who have their hearts reconciled to every duty in the season of it: *Nothing shall offend them*; they will find no difficulty in offences or stumbling-blocks which will make others to fall, or turn out of the way. And amidst all the cavils of adversaries, who must be accountable to God for their disaffection; the *warrantableness* and *duty* of solemn covenanting, of public vowing or swearing to the Lord,—will continue plain and indisputable, to those whose hearts are properly inclined to God's testimonies: As it may be sufficiently

VOL. I.

2 X

sufficiently

* This part is taken from a Sermon which was preached by the Writer of the present Display (from *Neb. ix. 38.*), June 10th 1757; and published some years ago, along with several Sermons by one of his brethren on the same subject.

ficiently argued from five general topics, viz. From *scripture-precepts*, *scripture-examples*, *scripture-prophecies*, *scripture-promises*; and the *natural principles* of religion. And,

I. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from express *scripture-precepts*, as (in Deut. x. 20.), *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name: (Psal. lxxvi. 11.)*; *Vow and pay, unto the Lord your God: (Jer. iv. 2.)*, *And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth; in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*—Here it is evident, (if we would not explain away the meaning of the Lord's word, and leave it of an uncertain sound); that there is a vowing and swearing, even a formal vowing and swearing, which belongs to the duty of Church-members. And it is not merely or immediately meant of such swearing as takes place among men, for confirmation,—as an end of all strife, about their secular and relative concerns: But it is plainly meant of a swearing, the matter as well as the nature of which is religious. It is a swearing, as to the matter of it, that *the LORD liveth*; and this implies an acknowledging and avouching of all the properties, prerogatives, interests, and cause of the living God,—which he can no more part with, than with his life or being. Thus it is a *vowing to the LORD*; a coming under solemn and explicit engagements to the Lord, for the performance of the duties incumbent upon us. And the *swearing by his name*, which is enjoined in the first of the texts cited,—must, according to the connexion of the words, be a swearing to what is there required; to fear the Lord, to serve him, and to cleave unto him. Neither is the vowing and swearing required in these texts, confined to any private personal transaction: The precepts are general, to a professing people; so that the more solemn and public this work be, in a joint manner,—the more fully must it come up to the import of these precepts. And when the Lord has given us such precepts in his word, shall we think that we are left at freedom to disregard them,—or that we are not thereby warranted and called to set about a public vowing and swearing to the Lord; when, in providence, we have particular occasion and causes for doing so?

II. The

II. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from *scripture-examples*. It cannot be refused, that there were various examples of this work under the Old Testament ; and the only question here must be,—Whether these examples be imitable by us under the New Testament dispensation, or set forth for our imitating them upon particular occasions ? And for clearing this, we may briefly observe a few things. As,

1. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the *matter* thereof. What they solemnly engaged unto on these occasions, was not merely the performance of things ceremonial and typical,—or judaical ; but also, and more especially, things moral ; of perpetual obligation. In the Solemn Covenant of Nehemiah's time,—they engaged to *observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes* ; according to the 29th verse of the 10th chapter. In that of Josiah's time,—they engaged to *walk after the LORD ; and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes*, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.). In that of Jehoiada's time,—they engaged that *they should be the LORD's people*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 16 : And in Aza's time,—*they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul*, (2 Chron. xv. 12.).—Now, it is as competent for us as for them, as incumbent on us as on them,—to walk after the Lord ; to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his testimonies and his statutes ; to be the Lord's people ; and to seek the Lord God of our fathers, with all our heart and with all our soul. But if it be still competent for and incumbent upon us, to be and do so ; it must be strange to suppose, as if it were not equally competent for and incumbent upon us, to come under solemn engagements for that purpose,—when particular and special occasions for doing so come in our way. Again,

2. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the *occasions* thereof.—Upon what occasions did the Jewish people set about that solemn work ? Was it in **any** periodical turns,

turns, or at any stated course of times,—like those solemnities which were peculiar to them as a Jewish Church? By no means. But without any judaical institution, any special ordinance for it in the law of Moses,—they set about this work occasionally; upon the back of great corruptions and backslidings, when they had been visited by divine judgments on account of these,—and when they were awakened to set about reformation, in returning to the Lord. Thus, it was a work which they set about, not peculiarly as a Jewish Church,—but in general as a Church, a professing people: So that, in this, they were for an example to us. And,

3. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the *circumstances* thereof.—Here we shall only observe the circumstances of that covenanting which took place in Nehemiah's time. And it is observable, that this work was not gone about in such a way as belonged to the Mosaical and judaical ordinances; as to which, the Priests and Levites stood in a distinct capacity. For though some Levites officiated in the public confession, as the mouth of the people; and though a number of Priests and Levites led an example in the matter: Yet the making of the Covenant, or the entering into the oath, was equally by the body of the people; *their wives, their sons, and their daughters*,—even *every one having knowledge, and having understanding*; as in the 28th verse of the 10th chapter. Again, the day upon which this solemn work was gone about—was not a day set apart for any solemn worship in the law of Moses; it was not a day of any solemnity to them peculiarly as a Jewish Church, but a day which they themselves set apart for that purpose. We find, in the latter part of the 8th chapter, that they had been keeping the feast of Tabernacles; which began on the 15th day of the 7th month: And they kept it seven days, ending on the 21st of that month; and on the 8th day, being the 22d of that month, *there was a solemn assembly according to the manner*. But on the 2d day afterwards, being the 24th day of the month, as in the beginning of the 9th chapter,—they observed a solemn fast, without any particular institution for it: In the close of which they solemnly renewed covenanting-work.

nanting-work. It is then evident, from the circumstances of the work,—that they did not go about it as peculiarly a Jewish Church; but in general as a Church, a professing people: So that, in this, they were for an example to us. Yea farther,

4. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from an *actual imitating* of them under the New Testament.—We need not think it any way strange, that little is to be found to this purpose in the history of the New Testament. Many things are not there recorded—of what even our Lord said and did, though no doubt in themselves very material. And we need as little doubt, that many things approved and imitable in the time of the Apostles—are not recorded; where the rule of practice as to the matter was already plain enough in Scripture.—But we have an example of solemn covenanting in the New Testament; which cannot be explained away from that meaning, without explaining it to nothing. The Apostle says, concerning the Churches of Macedonia [2 Cor. viii. 5.], *And this they did, not as we hoped; but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* This giving of their own selves to the Lord—cannot be understood, merely in general, of their making and maintaining a profession of Christianity; and keeping up a regular dispensation of the word and sacraments: For this had been nothing at all peculiar for the Apostle to take notice of about them, more than about other Churches. Besides, what they did in this matter was beyond the Apostle's expectation; *not as we hoped*, says he: But could it be more than the Apostle expected, that they were professing Christianity,—and keeping up regular Assemblies, for the dispensation of word and sacrament? Certainly all this was what the Apostle expected, and took for granted. But there was something more here, in giving their own selves to the Lord: For, as a well-known Commentator expresses it,—“They solemnly, jointly and unanimously made a fresh surrender of themselves, and all they had, unto the Lord Jesus Christ.” What particular formality they observed in doing this, whether only by words or also by writing,—is not material here: For it is enough to the present

present argument, that this was a solemn and extraordinary devoting of themselves to the Lord; beyond what the Apostle had been expecting. It was thus a solemn covenanting-work, whatever was the particular manner of it: And a work about which they did not wait for any apostolical injunction or direction, for any signification of Paul's will to them; yet he acknowledges that it was *by the will of God*,—in conformity to Scripture-examples which they had before them. We need not be surprised, at finding no more instances of this sort recorded in the New Testament; the history of which reaches down but about thirty years from the beginning of the Christian Church: While our rule, in this case, is supposed to be plain enough in the Old-Testament scripture, as it was to these Macedonians. Neither may we slight this single instance of covenanting-work in the New Testament,—while one hint in the records of the Holy Ghost must be of the greatest weight: And it is from such a general or occasional record of Scripture-example, that we gather the institution of the Christian Sabbath *. Moreover,

5. That the examples of covenanting under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the special *unity* of the Old and New Testament Church. These are not properly two different Churches as to their nature, but all one Church; brought through infancy and non-age to a state of maturity, under a more full and clear dispensation of grace.—According to the ancient prophecy and promise, *Japheth* (the posterity of Japheth in the Gentile European nations, the isles of the Gentiles) is brought to *dwell in the tents of Shem*; of the Jewish Church, who descended from Shem: The Gentiles are brought to dwell in the same tents, in the same Church-state, with the same privileges,—

* That public covenanting was used by the primitive Christians, seems evident from a Letter concerning them by *Pliny* (one of the Roman Governors) to the Emperor *Trajan*; written soon after, if not before the death of the Apostle *John*. Therein he represented,—“That they were an harmless and inoffensive sort of people; who only worshipped Christ as God, and bound themselves by oath to abstain from all wickedness.” This evidently meant a joint swearing or vowing: And if they bound themselves in this solemn manner, *to abstain from all wickedness*; it must certainly be understood, that they at the same time, in the same manner, bound themselves—to the performance of all duties.

privileges,—under a new and more glorious administration. Seeing therefore the Jewish and Christian Churches, though they be two as to their form, are but one Church as to their nature ; it plainly follows,—that approved examples under the Old Testament, as to those things which are of a moral nature, cannot be antiquated under the New Testament.—And all this further appears, from the view which is given of the Christian Church in the 7th chapter of the Revelation. There, we have an account of sealing-work among the tribes of Israel ; twelve thousand sealed of each tribe, making in all one hundred and forty-four thousand. And it is not the Jewish Church, in the tribes of Israel after the flesh, which is there set forth : But it is a metaphorical view given of the Christian Church, in the days of Antichrist's rise and prevalence ; the same *hundred and forty-four thousand* who are represented as standing *with the Lamb upon the Mount Zion*, at the dawning of the Reformation from Popery,—according to the 14th chapter of that book, at the beginning. And must not the Old-Testament examples of solemn engagements to the Lord, be for our imitation still ; when the Christian Church is thus represented, as possessing the room and character of these ancient tribes of Israel ? Certainly our obligation, in this matter, cannot be inferior to theirs ; nor are we intitled to less solemnity, in professing what obligation we are under to the Lord God of Israel.

But against this whole argument from Old Testament examples, there is an objection made by some,—from what we have in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we have an account of a *first* and a *new* Covenant which God made with Israel ; a *new* Covenant under the Gospel, by which the *first* was superseded,—decayed, waxed old, and vanished away : And some would have this old Covenant to be understood of that covenant of duties which Israel came under, and several times renewed. But it is plain, that by the first and old Covenant there,—we are to understand the peculiar administration of the Covenant of Grace which the Jewish Church was under ; in the way of types and ceremonies, and through a peculiar Covenant that God made with them about their possession of Canaan. For how erroneous, how absurd must it be, to suppose
that

that their Covenant of Duties was antiquated by the gospel,—not to remain imitable in the Christian Church? It is even the same thing as to suppose,—that the gospel antiquates or supercedes an obligation to be the Lord's people, to walk after the Lord; leaving no room, at least, for any solemn profession of such a thing. It can be no less than a blaspheming of the gospel, to put such a construction upon it.—But we now proceed to observe, that,

III. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from *Scripture-prophecies*.—It is a prophecy respecting gospel times, that we have (in Isa. xix. 21.); *And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day;—they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.* A Christian Church was soon planted in Egypt, when the gospel came to spread among the Gentiles: And besides, in the language of the Old Testament,—*Egypt* is a name given to the Gentiles in general; who are thus denominated from those Egyptian Gentiles that were most directly opposed to God's Israel of old,—and respecting whom he said, *I will call them my people which were not my people.* Now, it is prophesied concerning them,—*They shall vow a vow unto the Lord*; or, as it is expressed in the 18th verse of that chapter, *They shall swear to the Lord of Hosts.*—To the same purpose is that prophecy (in Isa. xlv. 4.) *One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* That text is not to be understood of different persons acting differently,—but all of one and the same party: For, according to the original, it may properly run,—*One shall say; and he shall call himself; and he shall subscribe.* Now, what warrant can we have to explain away these prophecies of vowing, swearing, and subscribing,—to explain them away from the native and literal meaning of the words? That meaning which it behoved them to bear, according to the known examples of the Old-Testament Church which they refer to.—It is a similar prophecy that we have (in Zech. xiii. 9.); *They shall say, The Lord is my God.* For this *saying* must extend unto all that formality and solemnity of saying it—which

was

was well known in the practice of the Old Testament Church; concerning whom it was declared, upon an occasion of solemn covenanting among them,—*Thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God*, [Deut. xxvi. 17.] And this same is set forth as an event of gospel-times, [Rev. xi. 15.]; *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*: For this must extend unto all that solemnity of a people's devoting themselves to the Lord, which was well known in the practice of the Old-Testament Church; while the duty of solemn professions cannot be weakened or abated under the gospel.—And accordingly, the glorious Reformation from Popery was carried on in the way of solemn covenant-engagements to the Lord. It was so in foreign Churches: And it was so, both in Scotland and England; even before the time of what is now called the National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant. This was a mean which the Lord then eminently blessed; a practice which he eminently countenanced from heaven, and which has been witnessed unto by the blood of Martyrs. Nor will it be found a light matter, at this time of day, to contradict or disparage the same. The Lord will have it effectually vindicated, in his own time. But,

IV. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from *Scripture-promises*. The afore-mentioned prophecies are also promises, being prophecies of good things. But what we mean here,—are promises which do not point out a special event of the matter in hand; being only general encouragements to such work in the season of it. Such promissory encouragements we have, [Matth. x. 32.]; *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*: [Heb. x. 23.]; *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised*: And [Rev. iii. 10]; *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation*. Now, as these are sweet encouragements to our Christian profession and confession, in all the steps and degrees of it; so there can be no warrant to bear them down from an application to the most open and solemn confessing of Christ; the most open and solemn

keeping of the word of his patience, his cause,—in bearing the most explicit testimony of our adherence to the same. There are no lengths which the Church went of old,—in solemn devotions of themselves to the Lord, avouchings of him to be their God, and engagements to be for him; no such lengths but what we are still encouraged to go, in signing ourselves by the name of Israel. And we may observe that,

V. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from the *natural principles* of religion. It is plain, even from natural religion,—That as we are wholly from God, so we ought to be wholly for him; and that our subjection to God, in espousing the interests of his kingdom and glory, ought to be professed: As also, That our profession of this, in our several capacities, cannot be too public and explicit. What we ought to profess of the Lord's cause and truth, and of our allegiance to him,—we ought to profess the same in the most open and formal manner, according to the occasions which we have for doing so. It is most absurd, and very inconsistent even with natural religion,—to suppose that our professed subjection to the gospel, or the profession of our allegiance to Zion's King upon fit occasions, can be gone about with too much form and solemnity: Or that there can be any excess of our profession, in public swearing unto him; when yet there is no excess, in such a manner of professing allegiance to an earthly Sovereign. And while the subjects of earthly Kings do reckon it suitable and seasonable, in times of open rebellion,—to approach their Sovereign with solemn addresses and oaths of allegiance: Shall it not be competent for, and incumbent upon the subjects of Zion's King, in times of open rebellion against his government; to give the most open testimony of their adherence to him and his interests, by public vowing and swearing to the Lord,—renouncing all opposite interests, covenanting to be the Lord's people, and engaging to walk after the Lord *? The warrantableness and

* A striking proof of the *natural* Warrant for Covenanting, is to be found in some passages of the Heathen Philosopher *Epictetus*,—who lived

and duty of such procedure—is plainly founded on the obligation which we are under, both from natural and revealed religion, to be for the Lord and not for another; to state ourselves on the Lord's side, in a day of great apostasy from him. And, as we have observed, it is grossly absurd to suppose,—that a stating of ourselves on the Lord's side can be with too much form and solemnity; especially when it is gone about in a conformity with examples, which the Holy Spirit is continually laying before us in Scripture.

Upon the whole,—the warrantableness and duty of solemn covenanting cannot be controverted; but from a spirit of disaffection to the peculiar interests of religion, or of lukewarmness concerning the same.

P A R T II.

A Defence of Solemn Covenanting, in opposition to the Preface of a late Survey.

A PAMPHLET was published, about three years ago,—entitled, [*“An impartial Survey of the controversy so long agitated in the Secession, relative to the religious clause of some Burgeſs-oaths”*]: With a *Preface*,—wherein (according to the title-page) *“The nature and seasons of public covenanting are explained upon Scripture-principles; in order to ſatisfy the ſcrupulous, about the expediency of renewing our ſolemn Covenants at preſent.”*

One would imagine, from theſe words, that the *Preface* had been deſigned for ſolving and removing ſcruples; thus

ed in the days of Nero; and which, in a literal tranſlation from the original Greek, run as follows, *viz.*

“Thou art his workmanſhip; he hath not only made thee, but hath beſtowed all his benefits upon thee.” *Lib. ii. cap. 8.*

“To this God ye ought to ſwear, as the ſoldiers do to Cæſar. But they indeed, for the ſake of wages, do ſwear, that they will above all things ſtudy the welfare of Cæſar; and while you are loaded with ſo many and ſo great benefits by God, will ye not ſwear to him? or, when ye have ſworn, will ye not perform? And what ſhould ye ſwear? That ye will always obey his voice, that ye will never complain of him, that ye will never find fault with any thing he meaſures out unto you; that ye will always willingly do and ſuffer whatever he ſhall think neceſſary to put upon you.” *Lib. i. cap. 14.*

thus to satisfy persons about the present expediency of the renovation mentioned, in order to their setting about it without delay. But, under this false face, the real design and endeavour is,—not only to promote and confirm scruples, for exploding every supposition of such expediency; but also to defame and abolish that solemn work altogether: Tending to corrupt the mind and stupify the conscience of his scrupulous reader, about the whole affair.

This attack is also distinguished from all others that have yet been made, upon the Associate Presbytery's method and appointment of covenanting-work,—by another and more notable mark of *treacherous dissingenuity*; like the part which *Joab* acted [2 Sam. iii. 27.], under a mask of friendship. For, it is not made by one who had never acknowledged, or had fairly renounced the state of the Secession-Testimony: But by one who still pretends, as if he and his party (in the Synod of the separating brethren) were the only true successors of the Associate Presbytery in their Constitution and Testimony; that they “have uniformly kept on their first ground,”—as to “the rise and grounds, and original measures of the Secession,”—and have “dropt no part of the Testimony they had espoused *.”

The Prefacer manages all his malignant opposition to covenanting-work, by way of answer to what he (ironically) calls *that hard question*; which he says “The Burghers” (he and his party) “are often asked,—Why they do not renew the Covenants, if they maintain nothing but covenanted principles?” *p* 4. 15. But there is a palpable deceit, in representing such a question as having been ever put to any of them. It should have been honestly represented,—as a question about why they do not proceed in covenanting-work, according to the Act of the Associate Presbytery for that purpose; if, as they pretend,—they have still kept the first ground of the Secession Cause and Testimony, as it was among the hands of that Presbytery. However, his way of stating the question saved him a deal of trouble in answering it.

It would be business too low for this place,—to chastise the arrogance, impertinencies and improprieties in the Prefacer's manner of writing; with the malicious constructions

* *Survey*, p. 40, 71.

structions and suppositions, as also the virulent calumnies about loose procedure in covenanting work,—which are cast upon the Associate Synod, in that preface: But he, and his correspondent whose invective he adopts,—are left to the free enjoyment of whatever satisfaction they can find, in such measures of scurrility and slander. It may be sufficient here to expose his erroneous doctrine,—about *solemn covenanting*, about *renewing* Solemn Covenants, and about the Associate Presbytery's *manner* of renewing our Covenants: A doing of which in a soft or apologetical manner, is what he has forfeited all title unto,—by the abominable spirit of his *Preface* and *Survey*.

SECTION I. Of Solemn Covenanting.

I. **W**HEN the Prefacer has told, what none ever disputed, that “covenanting is but an occasional duty,”—he allows that, in three cases, “a public Covenant or Vow *may be made*” (putting these words into a distinguished character as here) “unto the Lord;” and tells that “these are the only cases wherein the Church is *authorized*, by scripture-example or command, “to make a Covenant.” p 5. Thus, though he gives some room to the words *duty* and *command*, he gives none to their sense,—with regard to covenanting; but really turns it off the footing of *duty* or *obligation* in any case, to rest only upon the footing of mere warrant,—as what *may be* or is *authorized*: A short method indeed, for setting the consciences of his scrupulous persons quite at ease,—in the neglect of that solemn work.

II. The *three cases*, which he dictates to be the *only cases* wherein this work may take place, are these, *viz.* “when the Church is brought into a situation which contains “a providential call to some important duties, *connected* “only with her present condition; or when she is in providence brought into a situation, whereby her members “are in great danger of falling from their steadfastness; or “when a general reformation is to be accomplished,”—that is, as he explains it, “a present reformation among “the covenanters:” And he pronounces, that “to make “a Covenant with the Lord in any other circumstances,
“ and

“ and for any other purposes,—is equally contrary to “ Scripture and common sense.” p. 5.

The first of these cases, according to any proper sense of the words, is indeed very singular,—even not supposable, as what ever did or can exist ; that the Church should have “ a providential call to some important duties *connected only with her present condition* :” Or, as he further expresses it,—“ duties presently incumbent on the Covenanters, “ *in virtue* of their present and peculiar situation in providence.”——An enforcing of the call to certain duties, and an affording of some new or peculiar occasion for the performance of certain duties ; these are things that may well enough be ascribed to providential circumstances. But that any duty can be founded upon such circumstances,—as being incumbent *in virtue* of them, and *connected only* with them ; or as duties which had no foundation before these circumstances, nor will have any after them : All this is certainly a very gross imagination ; which yet may serve to explode covenanting-work, so far as depends on that first case,—while people can never apprehend any such duties as it proceeds upon.

And it is observable, as to all the three cases, when determined to be the *only cases* ; that the door is thereby absolutely shut against public covenanting,—so far as it may be for the purpose of solemn homage and allegiance by the Covenanters to Zion’s King, in opposition to the course of a rebellious people among whom they live : Though it was certainly one purpose of all covenanting-work in the Jewish Church, to have the name and cause of Israel’s God held fast ; not only unto a bearing down of corruptions among themselves, but also as a proper witnessing against the idolatry of the nations around them ; according to their character and duty, as *a people redeemed from the nations and their gods*,—of whom the Lord said, *Ye are my witnesses that I am God.*

Thus the Prefacer endeavours, by his above doctrine of cases, of *only cases*,—to abolish all notion among people, of setting about that solemn work in the character of witnesses for Christ ; or of their ever being either called or warranted to make an appearance on the Lord’s side, and to be valiant for the truth upon the earth,—in the way of so-

lemn

lemn covenanting. And while his foresaid specification of cases is brought in as one reason, why his party do not renew the Covenants; if it be any way to the purpose, it must imply,—that none of these three cases do presently exist among them!

III. He tells, that “scriptural covenanting was always managed upon principles which fully satisfied all that feared God,—universally edifying to the saints:” And that it “was never reckoned either necessary or seasonable, except in extraordinary circumstances; and these extraordinary circumstances were evident to all concerned,—universally allowed to be extraordinary,—generally acknowledged to be a sufficient call, to make a Covenant concerning them.” *p. 6, 7, 16.*

The Prefacer is here obliged to allow of some *extraordinary course* to be taken, in *extraordinary circumstances*; notwithstanding his stupid ridicule afterwards, in another case, of any such thing.—But covenanting-work is here put upon such a footing, as must supersede or exclude it altogether; so long as any controversy about it may take place, among any whom an arbitrary charity may please to consider as fearers of God or saints. Accordingly, the Prefacer gives it for one reason why his party do not renew the Covenants,—“that the Burghers cannot at present covenant with unanimity among their connections, nor to the general edification of such as fear God.” *p. 14.* And thus, covenanting-work must have no place in *an earnest contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*; it must have no place,—if any who may be reckoned saints, however far backsliding saints, shall please to object. Fine doctrine indeed, for gulling the consciences of professors! Proper doctrine, for obtaining the answer which he wants to his question; “Have we, in” (present) “circumstances, any scripture-warrant for covenanting?” *p. 19.* And thus also, all the cases in which he had allowed that covenanting *may be*—must go for nothing; because it is not supposable that any of them can ever be altogether uncontroverted, among all supposed fearers of God or saints.

IV. The Prefacer determines, that “covenanting should always be managed with a view to the time to
“ come

“ *come* : Mercies that have been received, and transgressions of the law of God in time past, may and should be considered as motives to this duty ; but the duty itself carries the mind only forward to future conduct.” p. 5, 6. And this pedantic observation might be taken, at first view, —as supposing all his readers to be arrant fools : For who but such could ever imagine, that any might pretend a present covenanting or engaging to do something in the time past ; while not a moment of that time can ever be recalled, for a new doing of any thing in it ? Do people need to be taught, —that they should not engage to-day, that they will do something yesterday ?

But there is a snake in the grass here ; which creeps out a little afterwards, upon the head of *renewing* Covenants. —The base intendment of the observation is this ; that whatever influence of former things the mind may be under, considered as motives : Yet the deed of covenanting itself must have no respect to any former attainments or engagements, as recognising the same ; nor to any former evils whatsoever, —by way of testifying and engaging against them.

V. The Prefacer informs us, —that “ The design of Scriptural-covenanting was, to acknowledge God as the Lord of the faith, obedience and resigned submission of the Covenanters ; and to promote in their own souls a deep impression of his truths, a detestation of their own sinful courses, and an humble walking with God in the midst of the dangers they were beset with : —The matter of their Covenant was only a reformation from *their own sins*, and the future practice of their own duty ; —the nature of their Covenant was a solemn engagement to reform *their own present sins*, and to perform their duty in time to come ; —they made their Covenant concerning *the reformation of their own sins*.” And all this he sets in opposition to “ a bearing witness against others,” which he condemns. p. 7, 10, 11, 16.

In the above words the Prefacer once and again blunders upon a very hard task for his Covenanters, even beyond the reach of omnipotence ; which, though it can make an end of sins, cannot reform them. —But what is the

the genuine amount of all this misty doctrine, as to the case in hand? It is even this;—That any number of people, in their solemn and public covenanting, must have no regard but to their own intrinsic concerns; they are to keep as much within themselves, as any independent congregation in their ordinary and private Church-covenant: When their covenanting is in a state of Se-cession from the corrupt body of a Presbyterian National Church;—it must be without any regard to the corruptions of that Body, it must bear no testimony against the same: And the acknowledgment of God, as a Lord with respect to the Covenanters and their interests,—must abstract from any regarding of him as a Lord with respect to any other beings or interests in the world!—There is need to pray for the Lord's pitying a people, who can submit to such a direction of their consciences.

What has been said may serve, with regard to the Prefacer's general doctrines about solemn covenanting. The gross insult committed upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by his pretending to find any foundation in them for such doctrines, deserves no particular notice.

SECTION II. *Of renewing Solemn Covenants.*

UPON this head, the Prefacer assumes a most formidable appearance; while he comes forth brandishing a new piece of armour against the truth, such as was never before heard of in the Christian world. It is wholly of his own invention: And so confident is he in it as armour of proof, sufficient for making a full end of renewing Covenants,—that he brings it to the field with a bold defiance, like a *Goliath* in the cause of his party; "I challenge" (says he, *p.* 8.) "any person to produce so much as one instance from the Bible, of either Jews or Christians *renewing a former Covenant by any future oath.*"—Yet, after all, there is no real hazard to the truth from the shaking of this spear.

The new doctrine referred to, is of the following amount, *viz.* "The plan of scriptural covenanting in

“ the Church, both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation, should always lead directly to the *Word of God itself*:—It is always described as a *transaction entirely new*: It is never once called the *renewing of a former Covenant*; but is constantly said to be a *making or entering into a Covenant*, without any recognition on any former Covenant: No; covenanting upon the Scripture plan recognised, homologated or approved only *the book of God's Covenant*; but not *the Covenants made, or entered into by men*;—there is not the remotest hint that they renewed, or repeated their adherence to the deed of their fathers;—nor did they ever directly or indirectly intimate, that they referred to any former Covenant their fathers had made; when they covenanted for themselves on any occasion whatever.” (p. 7, 8, 9, 17.) Now,

I. A bold stroke is here given to Covenanting-work, in the repeated instances of it under the Old Testament. The plain meaning is,—that, in every new transaction thereof, no acknowledgment or account was made of any such transaction which had formerly taken place; that there was no homologating or approving of any Solemn Covenant which Israel had formerly made, no adherence thereto,—yea no reference to any such deed, as having ever taken place before.

II. The whole foundation of such new doctrine, is this; that, in every repeated instance of Covenanting among the Israelites, “ it is constantly said to be a *making or entering into a Covenant*, without any recognition on a former Covenant,—never once, called the *renewing of a former Covenant*:” And, for proof of this, the Prefacer quotes the expressions of *making* and *entering* used on each new occasion of that work; adding,—“ I have particularly cited the very expressions used about Scripture-covenanting, that it may appear in what light the Holy Ghost has represented every such transaction.” (p. 7.) But,

1. His quotations are very partial and unfair; fitted for serving his own purpose, not the purpose of truth. He conceals a most material circumstance; that in eight of the nine instances of covenanting which he refers to,—the glorious

glorious Object is acknowledged or represented in terms which necessarily import a reference unto and recognising of former covenanting *. He is still acknowledged or represented as *The God, the Lord God of Israel; the God, the Lord God of their fathers; our God, the Lord our God.* In the other instance [2 Chron. xxiii. 16.], it was a *Covenant that they should be the Lord's people*; which could not mean a becoming so for the first time, but a keeping up of that distinguished character which belonged to Israel. And the LORD's character as *their God*, with their character as *his people*,—always necessarily referred unto and recognised former Covenant-transactions between God and them, as the formal ground of these characters; according to the *mutual avouching* which therein took place between God and them, *Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.*

2. He tells us, of the repeated covenanting which then took place,—that “it is never once called the *renewing* of a former Covenant.” But what a sandy foundation is this, for supporting his new scheme? The question is not, about how it was *called*,—but about what it *was*; not about words, but about the matter of the thing,—not about the arbitrary stile of language, but about the necessary import of the deed. The Scripture briefly represents matters of fact, in the case,—without recording all the circumstances of manner or form. If it *was* the renewing of a former Covenant, we may well enough *call* it so; as our translators have not scrupled to do, in the *contents* of some chapters: While they say [Josh. xxiv.], *Joshua reneweth a covenant between them and God*; and [2 Chron. xxxiv.], *Josiah reneweth the covenant with God.* But,

3. What are we to understand, by the *renewing* of a Covenant? Nothing more can be the real import of the thing, than this; that, without moving any objection against the ancient form of a Covenant in its season, and while acknowledging breaches of God's law as likewise breaches of that Covenant,—there be a solemn avouching, not only of the primary obligation which the law of God lays upon us, but of a secondary obligation laid

* Deut. xxix. 25. Josh. xxiv. 23, 24. 2 Chron. xv. 12. xxix. 6, 10, xxxiv. 32. Jer. xxxiv. 13. Ezr. x. 3, 11. Neh. x. 29.

laid on us also by that former Covenant. Whatever variations there may be in the manner of doing this,—whatever differences as to its being done more expressly or implicitly; nothing further can belong to the nature of the deed *. Well,

4. When the people of Israel set about covenanting-work, on any new occasion,—was there no *renewing* of any former Covenant which Israel had made; according to the proper sense of the thing, above-expressed? Was there no reference to any such former Covenant; in considering themselves as chargeable with breaches of it, and considering it as a superadded obligation to duties?—If such had been the nature of their covenanting, as the Prefacer teaches, it must have been of an impious nature; as bearing no conformity to the tenor of the Lord's reproofs, nor of their own solemn confessions,—relative to such work.

Every Covenant which they made, God acknowledged to be *his* Covenant; as he said [Jer. xxxiv. 18.], *my Covenant*, (that is) *the Covenant which they had made before me*. And what was the tenor of his reproofs, relative to such work? It was this, viz. *This people hath transgressed my Covenant, which I commanded their fathers;—they rejected his Covenant that he made with their fathers;—they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord their God;—they have broken my Covenant;—they, like men, have transgressed the Covenant;—they have transgressed my Covenant †.*

And what was the tenor of their confessions, relative to such work; when confessing their own sins, and the sins of their fathers? It was this, viz. *They sinned against thy judgments,—and withdrew the shoulder*, (plainly referring to former engagements);—*they kept not the Covenant of God,—they turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers;—we have rebelled*, (plainly referring to former allegiance); *Why do we deal treacherously, by profaning the Covenant of our fathers ‡?*

Such

* See Page 268.

† Judg. ii. 20. 2 Kings xvii. 15. Jer. xxii. 9. Ezek. xlv. 74. Hof. vi. 7. viii. 1.

‡ Neh. ix. 29. Psal. lxxviii. 10, 57. Dan. ix. 5. Mal. ii. 10.

Such was the respect which the Lord always had, and which Israel in their good times always had,—to their former covenantings; utterly inconsistent with the new doctrine so boldly palmed upon us by the Prefacer. The Lord taught them, at a dreadful expence, that they should always maintain a special respect to the Covenants of their fathers,—though hundreds of years backward; by an example in the case of even a civil Covenant with the Gibeonites *: How much more, in the case of religious Covenants?

Yea, they were taught to consider what had been said of old time, in a way of covenanting,—as said by themselves, in the loins of their fathers; *of old time,—thou saidest I will not transgress* †: Which required a particular respect and adherence thereto, a particular sense of obligation thereby,—in their new covenantings. And however far they forgot or lost a sense of it, in their times of corruption; are we to suppose that, in their covenanting times, they were utterly regardless of all this: That there was then no recognition, no homologation, no adherence, no reference,—as to any former covenanting? The base supposition is plainly refuted, by the Covenant-characters under which they always considered both the Lord and themselves, on these solemn occasions; as above represented.

5. The Prefacer has the assurance (*p. 9.*) to give out,—that the Church of Scotland, in former periods of covenanting, was against renewing or repeating an adherence to the like deed of their fathers: And he offers to prove this, by a mangled quotation from the Associate Presbytery's *Answers* to Mr Nairn, (setting forth a deal of it in capital letters, as if it were a glaring proof of his point); thereby palming that vile doctrine on them also. But there have certainly been few instances of such effrontery in any writer; as if the chance of getting some readers imposed upon, might harden against all shame about the manner of doing it. For, as he could not but know,—the Associate Presbytery is there expressly pleading for the renovation of former Covenants; expressly pleading,—that the manner of covenanting agreed upon by them, is a real re-

newing

* 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

† Jer. ii. 20.

newing of our solemn Covenants; and expressly pleading, —that the covenanting in our last period of reformation, was a real and professed renewing of the National Covenant which had been sworn in the period preceding*. Only, they are there pleading,—that this *renovation* does not require a repetition of the same form and words wherein Covenants were formerly conceived.—And so, another passage in these *Answers*, which the Prefacer (p. 14.) also quotes for serving another purpose (with shameless inconsistency), bears the following conclusion, viz. “We find not any one instance that Israel, in renewing Covenant, did, at any time, repeat the form and words of a former Covenant: Yea, it is plain they never did: Though we have instances of their acknowledging and mourning over the breach of former Covenants. Yet will Mr *Nairn* venture to say, that Israel never renewed their Covenants? or that, When they entered of new into a Covenant,—they did thereby bury, sopite and destroy former Covenants?”

III. As this adversary to Covenant-renovation teaches,—that Christians, in covenanting, should have their attention wholly turned away from any former attainments of this sort; he sticks not at the monstrous absurdity of telling them, (p. 17.) that they have an “express directory” for this [in Rev. iii. 3.]: *Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.* Strange! May he not now make any thing a proof for any thing! Is not this an express directory for the very reverse, even for turning back their attention to former attainments; in order to a holding them fast, with repentance for their failings in that matter?

Well, but (says he, p. 17.) “The case may be illustrated by a familiar example.—When Christians live by faith, or walk in love, they are often repeating the same exercises of mind, and performing over again the same duties: Yet no man who understood the Gospel-scheme, would call their repeated exercising of faith a *renovation of their former exercise of it*; or their repeated acts of love a *renewing of their former acts of it.*”

But,

* See this at large, p. 259,—272.

But, in general, it may well be reckoned very odd,—to state a comparison betwixt permanent deeds in the Church, and transient acts in the mind ; as if there could be any sense, in arguing from the one to the other. More particularly, as to the *Gospel-scheme* (here pedantically lugged in),—what need is there for any man to understand it, in order to prevent his calling things as above expressed? A moderate knowledge of the *Common-sense-scheme*, may certainly serve the purpose. For, though a *like* exercise or act can be performed of new,—no body will imagine, that *the same* exercise or act can be *renewed* ; more than that the same time in which it took place can be recalled. And though some people cannot be beat off the notion of renewing *Covenants* ; it never entered into their heads to think of renewing a former *exercise* or *act* of covenanting,—while it is of the nature of every exercise or act, that it can be performed but once. Yet will the Prefacer's Gospel-scheme allow him to say, about a new act of faith or love, (as he argues about new covenanting),—that it contains no approbation of, no adherence to any former attainment or engagement in this matter!

If one should try to make sense of his illustration, it is a renewing of former *faith* or *love* about which he must be supposed to argue ; that a Christian's present faith or love, cannot be called a renewing of his former faith or love. Very true : But what then becomes of the comparison ? For a Christian's present faith and love cannot be called a renewing of the former, because it is just the very same with his former faith and love ! Still the same one faith and love, that he has to exercise all his days ; as much as still the same soul to exercise them.—And the Prefacer might have treated the understanding of his reader with more decency, than to befool it by such a senseless comparison.

IV. His finishing stroke to Covenant-renovation, lies in a vile reproach cast upon it (*p. 10.*) ; as if, in opposition to a being led “ directly to the word of God itself,”—men did thereby “ make the appearances their fathers made “ for religion, the ground-work of their own covenanting.”—But is there no difference between a pattern and a ground work ? Or doth a regard to former vows lie off the

the

the road to God's word? Or must a going forth by the footsteps of the flock—be now reckoned inconsistent with a going directly to the word of God itself?

This Prefacer will not refuse,—that he once solemnly vowed an adherence to some subordinate standards of religion, which were framed and avouched in the days of our fathers. But did he then take these standards for the ground-work of his religion? Or did he not take them for a proper guide,—as leading him directly to the word of God itself, for the ground-work of his religion?

These cases are quite parrallel, as to the present argument. And indeed, as may be particularly laid open in an Appendix to the next volume of this work,—his new scheme is not only laid against Covenant-renovation; but it even wickedly strikes at the root of all covenanting-work, yea of all engagement to any subordinate standards or tests of orthodoxy, in any period of the Christian Church: All under the stale pretence, of going “directly to the word of God itself.”

V. What has been said may serve, for the Prefacer's doctrine about Covenant-renovation: And another point, as very nearly connected with it, must now be considered,—his doctrine about *Covenant-obligation*; or about the binding nature of Solemn Covenants upon posterity.—In general, he explodes all that any mortal ever before meant by such obligation: And indeed, as to this point, he acts with self-consistency. For as the renewing of former Covenants just means an avouching the perpetual obligation of them, in a way and manner suited to our circumstances; all notion of renewing Covenants, either under the Old or New Testament, is destroyed of course,—by overthrowing that perpetual obligation.

The Prefacer's doctrine, upon this head, lies in the following account that he gives of his party (*p.* 14, 15.) *viz.*
 “The Burghers do maintain all scriptural covenanted
 “principles, to the best of their knowledge; but they
 “derive the obligation of these principles from the autho-
 “rity of God's word;—they own, in the highest and no-
 “blest sense, the binding force of these Covenants of our
 “forefathers:—They are persuaded, that no human
 “oath can add any obligation to that which arises from
 “the

“ the law of God : And yet they believe, that if we either
 “ omit the duties explicitly engaged to by our forefathers,
 “ whose transactions are known to us ; or commit the
 “ sins they engaged to put away ; in either of these cases,
 “ even *our sin*, in these matters, must have an higher ag-
 “ gravation of guilt and criminality. The nature of such
 “ sins of omission or commission, lies *wholly* in their being
 “ transgressions of the law of God ; but the aggravations
 “ of such sins arise from their being done against these
 “ measures of light and conviction concerning known and
 “ acknowledged sin and duty, which render the trans-
 “ gressor of the law of God a self-condemned criminal,
 “ In this sense, the Burghers stedfastly maintain the obli-
 “ gation of our Solemn Covenants : And if the Anti-
 “ burghers understand it in any other sense,” (as they
 “ certainly do) ; “ it is proper they should let the world
 “ know what they mean by it.”

But the world has not the smallest need to be let know,
 what these whom he calls Antiburghers mean in the pre-
 sent case : For they are sufficiently known to mean no-
 thing by the obligation of Covenants, other than what all
 the world hitherto has understood to be the sense of the
 thing,—according to the common use of the words ; that
 a being under the obligation of our Solemn Covenants,
 means a being *parties covenanting* in the loins of our fa-
 thers.*—However, this new-sense Prefacer might have
 given a good example ; in letting the world know plainly
 what he means : Were it not that promoters of error, as
 it is their interest, do readily practise the art of keeping
 their meaning under a mask. Yet, in the present case, the
 mask may be easily taken off.

VOL. I.

3 A

The

* This is certainly the only sense of Covenant-obligation, that ever
 entered into any mind till now. Accordingly, generations to come
 were considered, in their covenanting fathers, as parties then covenanting
 with God and covenanted with by him ; so that they came long after
 to be punished, not merely as Law-breakers, but likewise as Covenant-
 breakers,—respecting the Covenant made by them and with them in their
 fathers : According to *Deut.* xxix. 14, 15. 24, 25.—And hence appears
 the atrocious nature of the Prefacer's doctrine, about the Jews having
 never renewed Covenants ; while, if every new covenanting among them
 did not import a renewing of all former Covenants,—it must have im-
 ported a perfidious renouncing of all the Covenant-obligation which they
 had been formerly brought under, in the loins of their fathers !

The foregoing account which he gives of his party, bears a calumnious insinuation,—as if others derived the *obligation of their principles* from some lower authority than that of God's word. And why? Because they plead a *Covenant-obligation upon themselves*, to maintain these principles as derived only from the authority of God's word!—There is also some misty doctrine here, about the *nature* and *aggravation* of sin; which (beside that there is some nonsense in it *) is noway to his purpose: Further than as it bears another calumnious insinuation, that the friends of renewing Covenants are for putting them into the place of the law of God;—and as it excludes the breach of our Solemn Covenants from having any place, even among the aggravations of our sin; by confining these aggravations to a finning against our “measures of light and conviction,” which we may derive from these Covenants in common with any other means.

But he gives a further opening of his mind, in representing his party as “persuaded that no human oath can “add any obligation to that which arises from the law of “God.”—Had he said, that no human oath can add any authority to God's law, or make any increase of its obligatory power; every person who stands in awe of blasphemy would have agreed with him. Or had he said, that an oath can be of no real obligation, if contrary in its matter to God's law,—though it can make an obligation, in some cases, where that law makes none; he would have been liable to no contradiction. Or had he said, that the obligation of oaths is subordinate unto and founded in the law of God,—so that a breach of these is primarily a breach of that law; no fault would have been found with his doctrine.—But here is a quite different matter: Such a representation of his party (it is hoped most injurious)

as

* He tells, that “the *nature* of sins—lies *wholly* in their being “transgressions of the law of God.” But *guilt* certainly belongs to the nature of sin; and so, this must lie *wholly* in being a transgression of the law of God. Yet he owns, that an acting contrary to the Covenant-engagements of our forefathers—gives our sin “an higher aggravation” (that is, an high additional weight) “of guilt.” So then, this guilt lies *wholly* in acting contrary to the law of God; and yet *partly* in acting contrary to these Covenant-engagements!—*Primarily* in the place of *wholly*, would have saved the sense; but must have destroyed his argument.

as tends to make them odious, among all who pay the smallest regard to the LORD's name in any oaths whatsoever. For why should any oath be ever administered in any case, or why should a swearer make any account of his own oath in any case, or how can others have any dependence on a man's oath in any case,—if no new obligation arises from oaths!—

The law of God binds men; and this is *one* obligation, the primary obligation upon their consciences. But men also bind themselves by oaths; particularly by solemn vows of conformity to that law: And is not this *another* obligation,—an additional obligation, though subordinate? No; says the Prefacer: According to him, no human oath can add any obligation to that which men are previously under by the law of God: So that, beside the “guilt and criminality” which lies in *law-breaking*, there can be no additional “guilt and criminality” in *perjury* or *Covenant-breaking*; because there is no additional obligation, to be thereby trampled upon! What horrible doctrine, against all obligation of Oaths or Covenants!

Yet he has devised a new sense of such obligation; telling that, “in this sense, the burghers stedfastly maintain the obligation of our solemn Covenants.”—Well, what is the sense that he here means? It just amounts to this: That as we may derive measures of light and conviction about sin and duty, from what our forefathers did,—their transactions being known to us, while all histories of their times have not perished; so, a sinning against these our measures of light and conviction, is an aggravation of our guilt and criminality.

And is this to maintain, stedfastly to maintain the obligation of our solemn Covenants? is this to “own, in the highest and noblest sense, the binding force of these Covenants of our forefathers?”—What sort of relation has all this to these Covenants; other than to the case of any Covenants in the Jewish Church, or to the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, or to the case of the Angels who kept not their first estate,—or to a thousand other things, from which we may in the same manner derive measures of light and conviction about sin and duty? And is this “the highest and noblest sense” of Covenant-obligation,—

gation,—this arrant nonsense, so impudently palmed upon the world.

The real and dreadful issue of the matter, is,—that this Prefacer's doctrine wholly explodes the standing obligation of our solemn Covenants upon posterity; it blots out the breaking, burning and burying of these solemn Covenants,—from among the grounds of the Lord's controversy with this generation; and upon the matter justifies all those wicked laws, by which their standing obligation was condemned.

SECTION III. *Of the Associate Presbytery's Manner of renewing our Solemn Covenants.*

THE Prefacer having offered up all Covenant-renovation, yea and all Covenant-obligation, with all homage to God in solemn covenanting,—as a great sacrifice to the idol of his own malignancy; no wonder that the Associate Presbytery's manner of covenanting is next devoted by him to the same horrid treatment.

The manner of renewing our solemn Covenants, as agreed upon and enacted by them,—is in an *Engagement* to Duties, following upon an *Acknowledgment* of Sins; which have been fully exhibited in the preceeding part of this Volume. That Acknowledgment commences with the begun fall of Reformation-work, in the last century; without going back upon any mistakes or mismanagements, in the preceding work of Reformation: Because evils of this sort cannot be properly ranked among the standing grounds of the Lord's controversy with their posterity; or any other evils—but these which belong to the succeeding course of apostacy from that Reformation.

The Bond, or Engagement to Duties, which follows upon that Acknowledgment,—bears a general reference to the evils which are therein particularly expressed; as an engagement to contend and testify against the same: Evils which are noway matters of doubtful disputation, among the genuine friends of the Secession-cause; however much any of them be so among others, in this corrupt generation. That Bond also particularizes some of these evils; under the characters of *Deism*, *Arianism*, *Arminianism*,—*Independency*,
and

and *Latitudinarian tenets*: But these cannot justly be reckoned obscure things, in dark or ambiguous terms; because each of them is particularly defined and explained, in the preceding Acknowledgment.

The Prefacer's audacious hostility against that solemn work, as attacking it on different sides,—is now to be considered. And,

I. He reproaches it (p. 10, 11, 15.) under the character of “the Antiburghers covenanting,—their form of covenanting,—the form of covenanting presently used “by the Antiburghers.” But the present form of covenanting in *Scotland* as used by these whom he calls by that name,—is precisely the same, without the smallest addition or alteration, that was agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery in the year 1743. And therefore the Prefacer, for himself and his party, has hereby foully renounced all succession to the Associate Presbytery,—as to the state which the Secession Testimony was brought unto among their hands: So that he cannot longer pretend, without intolerable absurdity and impudence,—as if they had “uniformly kept on the first grounds and original measures of the “Secession;” and had “dropt no part of the Testimony “they had espoused.” No; he must leave all this as the distinguishing character of those whom he now reproaches for their form of covenanting.

II. He declaims against this form of covenanting, upon the head of the *reduplication* which the Bond has upon the Confession *.——He tells us (p. 10, 11, 16.), that the
Confession

* The Prefacer has seen meet to pass by one topic of most senseless abuse, which has been committed upon this *Reduplication*.——It has been pretended, that the Bond thereby means a swearing to the historical truth of the facts represented in the Confession; a swearing, that the historical narration which it contains is true. But there is not one syllable in the Bond, which even seems to bear such a meaning; or to afford the smallest ground for imagining,—that it admits of any comparison with the case of ascertaining the truth of controverted facts, by the deposition of witnesses. Yea, it absolutely excludes any such meaning: Because the swearers of the Bond have been already making a solemn confession of the evils narrated, as true in point of fact,—excluding all controversy about the truth of the facts. And while their swearing necessarily supposes, that they are fully satisfied about the truth of all the facts narrated in the Confession,—having already made a solemn acknowledgment

Confession in the days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* “ was evidently a previous exercise,—a distinct exercise from their covenanting; their Covenant did not reduplicate upon their Confession, so as to embody that Confession into their oath and make it a part of their Covenant :” That “ the Seceding Acknowledgment of Sins,—ought never to be reduplicated upon in their Bond, so as to become any part of their oath :” And that “ the reduplication in their form of covenanting, upon a long history of sins, is at best ensnaring; and is altogether unprecedented in Scripture.”

And here indeed is fine doctrine about Covenanting; which, if it means any thing at all, must mean,—that Covenanting should never contain an engagement to contend and testify against any sins whatsoever: For fear of embodying these sins into, and making them a part of the oath!—Moreover, is not the confession as much a previous exercise in the present case, as much a distinct exercise from Covenanting,—as ever it was in the days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, or as ever it can possibly be; when the one exercise is quite finished and over, before the other be entered upon? And can the Covenant now be justly said to have one grain more of a reference unto or reduplication

judgment of them as such; it cannot be the *truth* of these facts, it can only be *their own engagement* to contend and testify against the *evil* thereof,—that they must be understood to swear unto, or to ascertain by their oath.

But the abuse of this hated Reduplication—has been carried to even a grosser absurdity: As if “ it must imply, that they believe the truth of the Acknowledgment so much, as to be able to swear, that what therein is mentioned as evil is certainly so ”——Certainly, they must believe the truth of the Acknowledgment in all its parts;—and they must believe, that whatever is therein mentioned as evil is certainly so: But they are not so stupid as to imagine,—that the *morality* of actions, or the *nature* of evils, is to be ascertained by oaths instead of arguments.

By such methods of reasoning, men evidently sacrifice the credit of their understanding to their malignancy. And all turns about to the same point which the Prefacer aims at; to defame and exclude all vowing to the Lord against prevailing evils,—while this cannot possibly be, without having a reference made to them in the oath: Such a reference or reduplication as belonged (though in a different form) to the Bond by which the National Covenant was renewed in the year 1638,—no less than to the Bond by which it is renewed in this period; as any body may see by comparing them.

reduplication upon the confession, as to the matter of the thing,—than it had in *Nehemiah's* time; when the Covenant was made [*Neb. ix. 38.*] expressly *because of all this* in the preceding confession?

The Prefacer's language, about *embodying* the confession into the oath,—and making it *a part of the Covenant, a part of the Oath*, (which yet was altogether as much done in *Nehemiah's* time as now); requires some other sort of understanding than the world can yet afford, to make sense of it: As the swearing a confession of sins, thus transforming either the confession or the sins into an oath, cannot but be rank nonsense.—And must every reference that an oath makes to any thing, be an *embodying* of that thing into the oath as *a part* of it? According to such reasoning, the oath of the Covenant in the year 1638 must have been a very monstrous oath. Yea, at this rate, every religious oath among Christians must be said to have all the Bible (even every history thereof) embodied in it,—made a part of it: And the *religious clause* of some burgessoaths must be said to have all the laws of the land about religion, and even the *Roman religion called Papistry*.—all embodied into, and made a part of that oath!—But what will this Prefacer stick at; when he reckons it “*enframing, and altogether unprecedented in Scripture,*”—to come under solemn vows for contending and testifying against the grounds of the Lord's controversy with this generation!

III. He declaims against the Associate Synod (*p. 11, 12.*) for still resting in that form of Covenanting which was agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery; which (says he) “cannot suit the present time:” Insisting that they should “enlarge their Acknowledgment of sins;” thus to have “a confession made of such sins as are in present being and strength.” And he uses two notable arguments, for this purpose:—One is (*p. 12.*) the example of “our forefathers;” they (says he) “having drawn up one acknowledgment of sins in 1638” (which was never before heard of!) “and another in 1648”: The other argument being a quotation (*p. 13, 14.*) from the Answers to Mr *Nairn*; which is merely an arguing against our being “obliged and confined unto a repetition of the same
“ form

“ form or words wherein our Covenants were conceived “ in the last century !” —Such arguments are only for being wondered at !

But, whatever the Prefacer thinks,—the Associate Synod reckons all the sins mentioned in their Acknowledgment, to be still “ in present being and strength ;” while the perpetration of many, and the guilt of all upon this generation, still is so : And let him reckon the opinion ever so extravagant ; they are of opinion,—that the public corruptions which have taken place since the year 1743, are still materially the same corruptions (in an incorrigible progress thereof) which have been specified in that Acknowledgment ; yea he himself (*Survey*. p. 35.) calls them, “ the manifest progress of the evils that occasioned “ the Secession.” Yet the Synod pretends to no perfection, in the management of the Lord’s work among their hands ; it is with much struggling, that they have been enabled to hold fast what they have : And only a man of the Prefacer’s cast could use an invective about their not doing more, as an argument against what they do.

He makes a senseless but malicious guess (p. 12. 13.) at one reason, for their “ neglecting to enlarge their Acknowledgment of sins ;” as if this would oblige them to take in (what he calls “ too strong an article) an approbation of all the censures they passed against the “ burghers.” But they would never find themselves obliged to this,—till once they found themselves obliged to make that approbation a term of communion among their people ; which none of them has ever yet done : They have never imagined, and it is expected never will,—that a positive approbation of all church censures should have a place among the terms of communion.—Yet one thing is plain ; that their still resting in their original form of Covenanting, must be very disagreeable to this Prefacer : Because it evidently shuts up him and his party, from a considerable advantage to their cause,—even from any occasion to declaim against the Synod for novelty in the manner of Covenanting.

IV. The Acknowledgment of sins is defamed (p. 13, 18.) as insisting on “ many facts which cannot be certainly
“ ly

“ ly known ;—that the bulk of common people can have
 “ no other *certainty* or *knowledge* about many things in
 “ their Confession of sins and Bond, but what depends up-
 “ on the authority of their pastors ;”—and that it is not
 “ less antichristian,” to proceed in this manner (as to
 “ some facts and doctrines) *merely* upon the authority of
 “ Seceding Ministers ; than for the Roman Catholics im-
 “ plicitly to believe as their Church believes.” But a
 baser calumny cannot be devised, than a giving out,—
 that people are called to take some *doctrines* merely upon
 the authority of Seceding Ministers : And as little are
 people called to take any *facts* upon their authority ; un-
 less an expressing of most notorious facts, could be reckon-
 ed the same thing with an ascertaining of them !

But what is the ground of certainty or knowledge that
 people should have about *facts*, or that the nature of the
 thing can admit of ? Is it any other than *testimony* ?—A
 divine testimony, about the truth of any facts since the
 days of the Apostles, we cannot have ; as no histories or
 records thereof are written by divine inspiration. We
 can therefore have no ground of certainty or knowledge
 about these, beyond what we ourselves have been eye or
 ear-witnesses of,—no other but human testimony ; the na-
 ture of the things can admit of no other : And according
 to the most express divine warrant (*Deut. xvii. 6. 2 Cor.*
xiii. 1.), we are to let our consciences rest upon this ground
 in such matters.

At the same time, as the Lord threatens a *visiting the*
iniquity of the fathers upon the children ; people are called
 (*Levit. xxvi. 40.*) to *confess their iniquity and the iniquity*
of their fathers : And how can this be done now,—unless
 they proceed upon human testimony, as to *the iniquity of*
their fathers * ? But the Prefacer’s doctrine about *cer-*
tainty and knowledge, as to matters of public confession
 before the Lord,—doth wickedly exclude all giving of

VOL. I.

3 B

glory

* A west-country minister of the established Church, already refer-
 red to in a note, when inveighing to his people against Covenanting-
 work among Seceders in his neighbourhood, affirmed,—that a “ be-
 “ lieving things on the testimony of such as they think grave and learn-
 “ ed men,” is “ according to the doctrine of the Jesuits.” And is it
 an article of Jesuitism, to take facts on human testimony ? After this,
 any thing !

glory to God, in lamenting over the iniquity of our fathers; yea over any iniquity whatsoever, except so far as a person (being an eye or ear-witness) is "certain from his own proper knowledge,"—as is expressed by one referred to in the note.

After all, it requires a great deal of assurance,—to represent the Acknowledgment of sins as containing any detail of uncertain facts; while all of them do lie in the most public and authentic histories and records of the kingdom: And though this Acknowledgment has now been lying before the world about thirty years, exposed to the criticism of many desperate enemies; none of them has ever yet been able to instruct one single falsehood in it. Yea, there never was any case since the days of the Apostles, nor can be to the end of time,—in which people had or can have better evidence to proceed upon, in confessing the iniquity of their fathers.—And must people be insulted, after all; as if they were proceeding with Popish or implicit faith, in this Solemn Work?

V. The Prefacer aims a finishing stroke at the Associate Synod (*p.* 13.), about their manner of renewing our Solemn Covenants; by telling that "they insist on many *antiquated facts* in their Confession of sins, which—have "comparatively little influence on present conduct."

These words are indeed but few; yet of great and horrid importance: As they contain the most daring outrage upon the work of bearing witness for Christ, yea upon the rights of the divine holiness,—that has ever been committed under the colour of friendship to our covenanted Reformation.

The Prefacer excepts none of the facts mentioned in the confession of sins, from the character of *antiquated facts*: Yea (whatever special respect he may have to some of an older date), he plainly includes them all under this character; because he inveighs against that Confession, as if it did not contain "a confession of such sins as are in "present being and strength."

Well; these many facts are, with him, *antiquated facts*: They are out of date, and should be out of head,—like an old Almanack. The oldest of them was not an hundred years back from the time of framing the Confession;

yet

yet they must all be considered now, as *antiquated facts*: Though facts above a thousand years back were confessed at covenanting in *Nehemiah's* time,—under a very different consideration.

Such doctrine cannot be excused from this blasphemous import; that when the Lord brought dreadful evil upon *Jerusalem*, for the bloody crimes of *Manasseh* above an hundred years before,—he was dealing unjustly, as proceeding upon *antiquated facts*! And that if the Lord shall come to visit the iniquity of our fathers upon their children in this generation, though not yet the third and fourth generation,—he will be dealing unjustly, as proceeding upon *antiquated facts*!

And now the Prefacer has, by one bold stroke, blotted out all the grounds of the Lord's controversy with this generation, all his indictment against them,—set forth in the Acknowledgment of sins; as a parcel of *antiquated facts*. He thus endeavours to make the generation quite easy about these matters; particularly, as if they had no reason to be apprehensive of the Lord's making inquisition for the blood of his martyrs in this land: Or as if it were but an *antiquated* warning, that lies in *Isa. xxvi. 21.*

But however little influence these facts have upon the present conduct of this Prefacer, and such as he; it is to be hoped that a remnant shall be preserved, quite otherwise exercised about them before the Lord. And it is to be feared that a time will come when he and they, with confusion of face, will find the Lord's then present conduct to be very greatly influenced by them.

C O N C L U S I O N.

The Prefacer having finished his labours against Covenanting-work, he most natively supposes (*p. 21.*) that people would say, what his own conscience could not but say,—that he is “an enemy to Covenanting.” And he certainly is so, as really (however differently) as any who ever passed under the character of *Malignants*, in former days of Solemn Covenanting.

But, says he,—“I appeal against the objectors to the
“equity, candour and justice of every reader.” And indeed,

deed, though none of his readers, so far as in the exercise of reason, can excuse him from this enmity; many of them may favour him with a sort of justice that will excuse the enmity itself. Yet this will prove a cold comfort to him, when a deep necessity shall be found, some time or other, —for appealing that cause from another sort of Justice to the bar of Mercy.

Upon the whole, it is to be considered as one of the steps of the Lord's righteous judgment upon a backsliding generation,—that he has permitted this man to rise up with a brow of brass, under a delusive mask of friendship to our covenantd Reformation,—for seducing the Lord's people from any genuine regard to it, and for promoting the present apostasy from a witnessing profession.

So much for the *Preface*. When the *Survey* comes to be considered, there will appear a further verifying of that awful prediction,—*Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.*

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX II.

A SERMON preached at the opening of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*.—at *Perth*, *October* 10th 1732 ; by the Reverend Mr EBENEZER ERSKINE Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling* * ;

O N

Psalms cxviii. 22.

The Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is made the Head-stone of the Corner.

IT is probable this Psalm was penned by David ; when the Ark of God was brought up from the house of Obed-Edom, to its proper place in Jerusalem : After the intestine broils between the houses of David and Saul had happily issued,—in David's promotion, by the common consent of all the tribes, to the crown and kingdom of Israel. But though this was the occasion, yet the Spirit of God had in it a further view ; namely, to Christ himself,—of whom David, and his administrations in Israel, were but a faint type and shadow.

David's accession to the throne was through many storms of opposition. Although God had chosen and ordained him for the kingdom and government, he was opposed by the house of Saul,—and them who adhered to that family ; yet after all, the house of David prevailed. Just so was it with the Son of David, our glorious Redeemer. Hell and earth combined against the Lord and his Messiah ; but God had determined that the government should be upon his shoulder, that his King should be set upon his holy Hill of Zion : And he carries his design against all opposers, as you see in my text ; *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head-stone of the corner.*

I need not stay to prove, that these words are to be understood of Christ ; after the express application that is made of them to him

* This Sermon (referred to p. 26.) was published under the following Title ; *The STONE rejected by the Builders, exalted as the Head-stone of the corner : And it is here added, as containing the ground of that process which issued in the Secession.*

In this edition, the scriptures quoted are mostly not extended ; but referred to, at the foot of the page. The quarrelled passages are printed in a larger character.

him by himself and his apostles, in the scriptures of the New-Testament. [Matth. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Eph. ii. 20.]

In the words we may notice the following particulars. 1. The metaphorical view in which the Church is here represented; namely, that of a house or *building*. 2. The character that our Immanuel bears with respect to this building; he is *the Stone*, in a way of eminence,—without whom there can be no building, no house for God to dwell in among the children of men. 3. The character of the workmen employed in this spiritual structure; they are called *builders*. 4. A fatal error they are charged with, in building of the house of God; they *refuse* the Stone of God's chusing, they do not allow him a place in his own house. 5. Notice the place that Christ should and shall have in this building, let the builders do their worst; he is *made the Head-stone of the corner*. The words immediately following, declare how this is effected; and how the saints are affected with the views of his exaltation, notwithstanding of the malice of hell and earth: *This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes*.

In discoursing of this subject, I shall just follow the order of the text now laid down; by explaining the particulars named: And then deduce a few inferences from the whole.

FIRST, Let us take a view of the Church under the notion of a house or *building*. This metaphorical view of the Church is very frequent in the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament*. Hence Paul, writing to Timothy,—directs him how to behave himself *in the Church of God, which is the House of the living God*.—Now with relation to this house or building, I offer the particulars following.

1st, That though God took up house with man at his creation, yet by the fall of Adam the family was skait; God broke up house with man: The family was parted, and the breach was wide like the sea. God could have no fellowship with man; for what fellowship could there be betwixt light and darkness, betwixt God and Belial: And immediately man, like the prodigal, forsook God; and wandered into a far country of sin and vanity.

2^{dly}, God had a stated design from eternity,—that notwithstanding of this breach, he would have a house and dwelling with fallen man; he designed to take up house, and gather the family again. Thence we are told,—that before the foundation of the earth, *he rejoiced in the habitable part thereof; and his delights were with the sons of men*. The foundation of this building was laid in the council of peace, and all the stones and materials of it were sequester and set apart: From the ancient years of eternity, Christ was chosen as the Foundation and chief Corner-stone; *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning; ere ever the earth was*. And all the saints were elected as living stones; to be renewed, justified, adopted, sanctified, and eternally saved in him and through him †.

* Isa. ii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. iii. 9.

† Eph. ii. 4, 5.

3dly, Before this designed building could go up, heaven must be at an infinite expence. Before one stone could be laid in the building, the glory of the infinite God must be veiled with a veil of flesh in the person of the eternal Son; the great Lawgiver must be made under his own law, God blessed for ever must be made a curse, and the Holy One of God made Sin. Justice had determined,—that *without shedding of blood there should be no remission of sin*: And except justice was satisfied, and the honour of the law repaired; God could never dwell upon honourable terms with man upon earth. Oh, the expence that God is at in building this house! We must be redeemed from the hand of justice,—not with *silver and gold, or such corruptible things; but with the precious blood of Christ*.

4thly, Every stone of this building is digged out of the deep and dark quarry of nature; being *dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath even as others, alienated from the life of God through ignorance, aliens from the common wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise*. In a word,—there is not worse stuff in hell itself, than the stones of this building are by nature. And who can quarrel with the great Builder,—for taking one stone out of the quarry, and leaving another behind him as he has a mind: Only when we look to the rock whence we were hewn, and the pit whence we were digged; we may say, Who made us to differ? for a Syrian ready to perish was our father.

5thly, The great engine the glorious Builder makes use of, for gathering the stones of the building, and carrying on the edifice,—is the pure preaching of the everlasting gospel. This is what the Prophet foretells*. *It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*. It is the gospel that is the *power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith*†. When Christ sent forth his Apostles and Ministers, as founders of the New-Testament Church; what were they to do? Their commission was to *go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven: Go teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. Hence the Apostle declares: *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*‡.

6thly, The Church thus gathered and united under Christ, as a glorious Head,—is the House of God, or his family upon earth. He has a manifold right unto her: A right by election, a right by redemption and purchase; a right by Covenant, and by possession. And if it is asked, what kind of a house is the Church of God? I answer,

1. It is his dwelling-house: *In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place is in Zion*||. God has no other rest amongst the children

* Isa. xxvii. 13.

† Rom. i. 16, 17.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

|| Psal. lxxvi. 2.

children of men, than his Church. *The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest, here will I dwell: so that the tabernacle of God is with men. And as a man takes pleasure in his house or lodging, so doth God take pleasure in his Church. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people, he will beautify the meek with salvation. I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and will be a father unto them; and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

2. The Church is his *treasure-house*. Here it is that he disposes of his most valuable furniture he hath in the world. *Israel is his peculiar treasure; the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Here he hath his crown and diadem: Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Here he hath his jewels as his people are called*; in comparison of whom, all the rest of the world are but trash. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Before he lose his jewels and his portion, he will sacrifice nations and kingdoms for their safety†.*

3. The Church is his *banqueting-house*‡; Here it is he makes unto all people (in the external dispensation of the gospel) a *feast of fat things; of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well refined*: And here it is that the souls of believers are entertained with meat and drink indeed; the hidden manna, and the fruits of the tree of life: And here it is that he himself is entertained with the graces of his own spirit ||.—Thus, I say, the Church is the house of the living God.

7thly, As the Church is the house of God, or his family; so Christ is the only door of the house §. No man can be reckoned a member of the Church, far less a Minister,—no, not in the judgment of charity; except he make a credible profession of his faith in Christ, and have a corresponding walk and conversation: And he that comes into the house of God, and lays claim to the privileges of the Church without it; the Master of the house in his own time will say to him,—*Friend, how camest thou in hither?* And they who adventure to confer the privileges of the Church upon those who have not come in by the door Christ; and who, in the view of the world, are of a malignant spirit,—enemies to the house of our God: These, I say, are guilty of casting that which is holy unto dogs; and of betraying the house of God, instead of ruling it to advantage.

8thly, Although this house or building be the object of the malice of hell and earth,—yet, as it has stood since its erection in Paradise; so it shall stand, while sun and moon endure in the firmament. Indeed particular Churches may be razed; but the Catholic universal Church shall stand the utmost efforts of the gates of hell. *The Lord is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early*: Hence is that song,—*We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried*

* Mal. iii. 17.

|| Cant. v. 1.

† Isa. xliii. 3, 4.

§ John x. 1, 9.

‡ Cant. ii. 4.

ried into the midst of the sea*. And all the storms that have blown upon her, from hell and earth,—have only served, by over-ruling Providence, to advance her true interest and glory†.

The SECOND thing proposed was—to speak a little of the character here given unto Christ, with relation to this building; he is the *Stone*. There are a great many stones in a building; but in this spiritual building of the House of God, Christ is the *Stone*, in a way of eminence and excellence: As if the whole building were of one piece; intimating that Christ and his Church are so closely united, as to become one body and one spirit. Upon this account the whole building is called by the name of *Christ*, as the principal part thereof‡. I conceive that Christ is called the *Stone* here, for the same reason that he elsewhere calls himself a Rock; *upon this Rock I will build my Church*: To intimate that he is the strength and stability of his Church. Now the excellency and necessity of this *Stone*, to the rearing and building of the House of God,—will appear if we consider,

1. That he is the *Stone of God's chusing*: *Chosen of God and precious* ||; *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*.

2. He is the *Stone of God's approbation*. Though he be *disallowed of men*, he had his Father's testimony from heaven with an audible voice; *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. And as he is approved of God, so he is approved of by every wise builder: They will be ready to say with Paul,—*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; that Christ came into the world to save sinners*.

3. He is the *Stone of God's trying* §. He was tried in the furnace of his Father's wrath, and he abode the trial; for he came forth more glorious than ever, in his resurrection from the dead. He stood the trial of the rage of men and devils, who endeavoured to stop him in his redeeming work. All the saints in heaven, and all believers on earth, have tried him; and will give him this testimony, that he is able to save to the uttermost.

4. He is the only *living and life-giving Stone* ¶. As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. He is the resurrection and the life, and all the stones of the building derive their life from him.

5. He is the *Stone that is laid by the hand of Jehovah, as a foundation in Zion* **. He was laid decretively from eternity; he is laid doctrinally and declaratively in a preached gospel: And he is laid efficaciously in a day of power; when the sinner is, by the power of the eternal Spirit, determined to take hold of him by faith. He is laid as a foundation, and the only foundation of hope and help for perishing sinners. Men have been trying

VOL. I.

3 C

in

* Psal. xlv. 2, 5.

† 1 Cor. xii. 12.

§ Isa. xxviii. 16.

** Isa. xxviii. 16.

† Isa. liv. 11, 12.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 4. Isa. xlii. 1.

¶ 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. 1 John v. 12. Col. iii. 3.

in all ages to lay other foundations, but still they have proven foundations of sand; another foundation can no man lay than that is laid, Christ Jesus. They who attempt to rear a church without Christ, or to build up to themselves a hope of salvation without him,—have only built castles in the air; and their building always turned to nought.

6. He is the matchless and incomparable Stone: For he is *the Head-stone of the Corner*: The brightness of his Father's glory is in him, and the express image of his person. All created glory shrinks into nothing and darkness, when he appears; for he is fairer than the children of men, as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood: And he casts a lustre and glory on the whole building, and every stone in it; for we are beautiful through his comeliness, the beauty of the Lord is upon his saints.

The THIRD thing to be discoursed a little, was of the workmen employed in this spiritual building or fabric of the Church; here called *Builders*. Christ himself is the principal builder, to whom the work is committed*: But he employs officers under him, for the on-carrying of the work; and these are called *builders*. Kings, and those in civil authority,—when, in their sphere, they lend their helping hand to advance and carry on the work of God; may be called builders of the Church: But under the New Testament, I find this term only applied to Ministers of the Gospel; ordinary or extraordinary. *He gave some apostles and prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers*†. For what end? It is for *the edifying of the Church, or building the body of Christ*. And Paul declareth‡,—that according to the grace given him, he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation. So that Ministers of the gospel are especially the New Testament builders.—Now, with relation to them, there are only these few things I suggest.

1. It is a very honourable employment to be a builder of the House of God: It is an employment wherein the Son of God as Mediator is engaged; and is it not an honour, to be co-workers with him? David esteemed it an honour, to be a door-keeper in the House of our God; but it is yet more so, to be a builder of the House. And as the work is honourable, so the reward of grace is proportioned; for if we keep the charge committed to us in building the House of God, we shall have place among them that stand by the heavenly throne: And they that be wise, shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

2. None can warrantably lay a stone in this building, except he be regularly called. What mason will put his hand to a building, unless he be employed by these that have warrant to call him?

* Zech. vi, 12, 13.

† Eph. iv. 11, 12.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 16.

This is a thing so necessary, that Christ himself would not meddle in building his Father's House till he had his Father's call *. There is a twofold call necessary, for a man's meddling as a builder in the Church of God; there is the call of God, and of his Church. God's call consists, in his qualifying a man for the work; and inspiring him with a holy zeal and desire, to employ these qualifications for the glory of God and the good of his Church. [The call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the Christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel, in the choice of men that are to build,—is not made to patrons, heretors, or any other set of men; but to the Church, the body of Christ,—to whom apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given. As it is a natural privilege of every house or society of men, to have the choice of their own servants or officers; so it is the privilege of the House of God in a particular manner. What a miserable bondage would it be reckoned, for any family to have stewards or servants imposed on them by strangers; who might give the children *a stone for bread*, or a *scorpion instead of a fish*, poison instead of medicine? And shall we suppose, that ever God granted a power to any set of men,—patrons, heretors, or whatever they be,—a power to impose servants on his family, without their consent; they being the freest society in the world?] But I pass this at present; perhaps more of it may occur afterwards.

3. The builders of the House of God, are not left to form or mould the house according to their own fancy; no, but they must follow the pattern shewed in the holy Mount of divine Revelation.

When the Tabernacle was reared, a plat-form of it was given to Moses. When the Temple was to be built, a pattern of it was given to Solomon by his father. And every pin of the Tabernacle and every stone of the Temple, was to be regulated and disposed according to the divine order. Now these were but types of the New-Testament building, whereof we now speak. Who builds a house, without forming a plan of it to the builder? Who erects a society, without giving orders about its government! They who assert the government of the Church to be ambulatory, cast a reflection on the wisdom of God,—which is not to be supposed of any wise man whatever. Now, I say, as builders of a house must renounce their own schemes, and follow the order of the owner; so Ministers and Church-officers, in building the House of God, must renounce carnal policy and the wisdom of the world; and follow

* Heb. v. 4, 5.

follow the orders given by God in his word, the perfect rule of faith and manners both to Ministers and Church members. What the particular model of the Church should be, is a thing, I hope, beyond controversy amongst us; who are solemnly engaged to maintain the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church: And therefore I do not enter upon it now.

4. God has endowed men whom he calls to build his House, with different talents and abilities; according to the different services they are to be employed about in the work. There are a great variety of gifts bestowed by Christ upon his Ministers, all calculated for the good of the Church of God in general: The Apostle illustrates this argument at great length, (1 Cor. xii.), through the whole of the chapter. If this were but duly considered, it would cure all manner of strife and emulation among the builders; that they should not grudge one against another.

5. The gifts of men, however edifying or well adapted for carrying on the work, will never do service without the blessing and countenance of the great Master Builder. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase.* And it is well, that it is so ordered of infinite wisdom; that men may not give greater glory to instruments than is due, and that the whole glory may redound to the Lord: For this end, he puts the treasure in earthen vessels,—that the excellency of the power may be of him.

6. The work of God is many times exceedingly marred, through the weakness or wickedness of pretended builders. But this leads me to the

FOURTH thing proposed; which was to speak of the fatal error of these builders spoken of in my text: They reject the Stone, without which their whole building was nothing but a medley of confusion; however glorious it might appear in their own eyes. *The Stone is rejected by the builders.*

They seemed to have a great zeal for the Messiah and his kingdom; yet when he comes, they do not allow him a room in his own House. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not:* And so they fulfilled Isaiah's prediction of him*. And because they rejected him, he hath rejected them as a Church and nation: And, Oh! how happy had it been,—if their error and ruin thereupon had served as a beacon to other Churches since their day, not to dash upon the same rock. But here a question naturally arises,—How did the Jewish builders reject the Stone which God had ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner? *Answer,* This came about through a great many corruptions which they introduced, both in principle and in practice. I shall only name a few of them; [and leave it to every one to judge, how far such evils or corruptions are to be found in our own day.]

1. Though they pretended a great regard unto the holy law of God, and cried out upon Christ and his Apostles as enemies to it; yet

* Isa. liii. 2, 3.

yet they narrowed and contracted the sense and meaning of it, confining it merely to the letter,—without searching into its extent and spirituality; which gave occasion unto Christ's Sermon on the Mount. By these means, though their hearers might have some notions of moral honesty; yet could they have no notion of the depravation of nature, and of the deceit and desperate wickedness of their hearts: Without which no man can ever know the need he has of the work of regeneration, or of a Saviour from sin.

2. Having pared off the spiritual meaning of the law, they sought justification by the works thereof; and thought a man's own personal obedience enough to recommend him to God *. They could frame no notion to themselves, of justification by the imputed righteousness of the Messiah: Though God had told them, that their righteousness and their works could not profit them; that it was a bed too short, and a covering too narrow for them.

3. These builders, through the legality of their doctrine, shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; they would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others that were entering to enter. God had told them, that the blessings of his Covenant must be had without money or price; but they would needs palm their legal qualifications upon God, and barter the matter with him: And thus instead of casting out the stones, or preparing the way of the people †; they threw stones and stumbling-blocks in the way of the salvation of sinners by the Messiah.

4. These builders deadened the ordinances of God, by their formality. Though they retained the shell of ordinances, they never regarded the end,—either with respect to their own souls, or the souls of their people; which was fellowship and communion with God therein; for which reason, God declareth his abhorrence of his own institutions ‡. One of the great sources of this evil was,—that if a man had been trained up at the feet of Gamaliel for a few years, and got a smack of the learning then in vogue; it was enough in their opinion to qualify him for being a builder in the House of God, though in the mean time he was an utter stranger to the work of grace on his soul: As is evident from the instance of Nicodemus; who, when Christ tries him upon the head of regeneration, he babbles and speaks nonsense, (John iii. 4.) *How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born.* Hence is that sharp challenge, (ver. 10.) *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?* There Christ speaks of it as a thing criminal,—that men should be made teachers of the Church, who were strangers to a work of grace; for what but dead formal worship could be performed, by men *dead in trespasses and sins.*

5. They were continually dabbled in politics, gave themselves up to the conduct of carnal wisdom and policy in the matters of

God

* Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3.

† Isa. lxii. 10.

‡ Isa. i. 11, 12, &c.

God and of his Church ; and through this carnal wisdom, they were led on to crucify the Lord of glory *. When once a Church comes to stand upon the rotten prop of carnal wisdom and policy, she is near unto ruin. It is true, ministers are to be wise as serpents ; but the wisdom of the serpent will soon lead us off our feet into pernicious courses, if not attended with the simplicity of the dove : and therefore we need, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,—we should have our conversation in this world.

6. [The Jewish builders valued themselves exceedingly upon their connection with the rulers and great folk in that day ; and having joined interest with them, treated the common people, especially those who owned Christ and attended his ministry, and that of his apostles,—as an unhallowed mob ; as is clear from (*John vii. 45, &c.*) ; where they having sent some of their officers to apprehend Christ, the officers return, declaring,—that *never man spake like this man* : To which the Pharisees reply, *Are ye also deceived ? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him ? But this people, who know not the law, are accursed.* As if the common people had been obliged to follow them, and the rulers with whom they connected themselves, by an implicit faith and obedience ; without ever bringing their doctrine and actions to the bar of the law and testimony, to be tried there].

7. They and the rulers having got the ascendant in the Sanhedrim, and other courts ; they took care to keep the power upon their side, by bringing in none but men of their own stamp and spirit : And if any man adventure to open his mouth, or testify against their corruptions in principle or practice,—presently combinations are formed, plots are laid ; and the edge of the Church's discipline, which they had grasped, is turned against him as a turbulent person, an enemy to the law and temple ;—as is clear from their management with Christ, his apostles, and the protomartyr Stephen. But yet notwithstanding of their pretended regard to the temple, they admitted the buyers and sellers to enter into it ; whereby they turned that holy place into a den of thieves, as Christ tells them to their face †. And whatever regard they pretended to the law, by a shew of sanctity before the world ; yet they abandoned themselves to all manner of secret and heart wickedness : Hence our Lord compares them unto *painted sepulchres* ; glorious without, but within full of dead men's bones and rottenness ‡.

Again

* John xi. 47. &c.

† John ii. 16. Matth. xxi. 13.

‡ Matth. xxiii. 27.

Again, however careful they were to cloak and palliate their secret wickedness, yet now and then it was breaking out; to the great scandal and offence of the poor people of God: By which means they made themselves contemptible, and caused many to stumble at the law,—and abhor the sacrifices of the Lord, as administer by them*.

Having lost the hearts of the people by these means, they gave themselves up to all manner of sloth and indolence; taking care to feed their own bellies, and enrich themselves with the good of this world; while, in the mean time, they entirely neglected the flock and heritage of God. Hence is that charge against them by the prophet Isaiah †.

Those Jewish rulers ruled the Lord's people with rigour, invaded their freedoms and liberties, bound heavy burdens on them which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers; and by this means the Lord's people were scattered from the worship of God in their synagogues, as sheep having no shepherd. Hence is that plain dealing by the prophet Ezekiel ‡.

In short, to such a degree of corruption were they arrived; that the holy and prophane, the clean and unclean, were alike to them,—providing they were of their way and party ||.

Thus the Jewish Church, and particularly her pretended builders, we see were sunk into the very dregs of corruption. And hence it came, that when the glorious and long looked for Messiah actually appeared among them, upon the stage of this world; instead of giving him a reception suitable to his excellency, as Immanuel God-Man, they treated him with the utmost contempt. Though he opened his commission,—and made it evident to the world by his doctrine, miracles, and the whole of his conversation, that he was none other than the brightness of his Father's glory; yet they disparaged his person, denied his supreme Deity, esteeming him only as the son of the carpenter: Contradicted his doctrine; and studied to obscure his miracles, by ascribing them to the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils. They blackened his character with reproaches,—as though he had been a glutton, a wine biber, a friend of publicans and sinners; and at length crucified him ignominiously, as though he had been a notorious impostor, betwixt two thieves. And when after his resurrection from the dead, he came to them in the ministry of his apostles,—bringing his righteousness and salvation near unto them, they finally rejected him and all the offers of his grace: For which reason, God was provoked, by a heavy sentence of excommunication, to cut them off from being a Church or nation,—under which they are lying to this day; his blood being upon them and upon their children, according to their wish at his crucifixion. And thus we see,

* Mal. ii. 8, 9.

† Isa. lvi. 10, 11.

‡ Ezek. xxxiv. 2.—6.

|| Ezek. xxii. 25, 26.

how the Stone of God's chusing was *rejected by the builders*. Let their example and ruin serve as so many beacons ; that we of the Gentile Churches may not dash ourselves upon the same Church-ruining and soul-destroying rocks : Which is the very use the Apostle Paul makes of this subject, when writing to the Romans *. Which melancholy event actually happened unto the Church of Christ at Rome, as we see at this very day ; it being now the seat of Antichrist, and a synagogue of Satan.

The only thing that remains upon this head, is to answer the following question, *viz.* Whence was it that the Jewish builders rejected Christ, the stone of God's chusing, trying and laying ?

(1.) This fatal error of theirs proceeded from their ignorance of Christ, in the excellency of his person ; and of the glorious mystery of redemption and salvation through him †. They were men of no despicable parts, capable enough to toss an argument, they thought themselves the only *seers* in Israel in their day : *Are we blind also ?* Yet Christ declares them blind like moles, in things relating to his kingdom. The least of Christ's babes, whom they reckoned among the accursed mob,—had more of the saving knowledge of God, and of the things of God, than they ; and the blind leading the blind, both stumbled on the stumbling-stone,—and fell into the ditch together.

(2.) Mistaken notions of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, was another cause of their rejecting this precious Stone. They had formed a notion to themselves, without any real ground from scripture prophecy,—that the Messiah was to appear in the form of an earthly monarch ; and that he was to lift up the head of the Jewish nation, and make the Romans and all the nations of the world their vassals and tributaries : But finding themselves mistaken, they disown and crucify him as an impostor. Which, by the bye, serves to discover what a dangerous thing it is,—not to have right conceptions of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. [I am persuaded, that carnal notions of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world,—lie at the bottom of many of the evils and corruptions in the day we live in.]

THE FIFTH thing in the method was, to enquire what may be implied in Christ's being *made the Head-stone of the corner* ; notwithstanding of the attempts of the builders to juggle him out of his place ?

1. It implies Christ's exaltation and victory over all his enemies and opposers ; he will have the better of them, let them do their worst. However Christ and his cause, interest and people, may be born down for a while ; yet the scales will turn, and like the house of David they shall prevail. Christ was personally oppressed and afflicted ; *he drank of the brook in the way*. Yet at length *he lifted up the head* ; and God *hath highly exalted him, and given him a*
name

* Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22.

† Acts iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

name above every name. And as it was with Christ personal, so will it be with his injured members. However they be *afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted*; yet God will lay their stones with *fair colours, and their foundations with sapphires.* Though Zion may be laid in ashes, yet she shall be built up again by the *Mighty LORD*: And when the Lord brings her forth to the light,—then *shame shall cover her who said, Where is the LORD thy God?*

2. It implies, that God has a great regard for the glory of his Son, as the Head and King of his Church; and that it is his will that *all men should honour him, as they honour the Father.* This was intimated by a royal mandate, issued forth from the excellent glory: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* God does not reckon it any injury done to him as God Creator, that we worship and serve him in the person of the Redeemer; for *his name is in him*: His glory, majesty, and other excellent perfections, are in him as they are in the Father; and therefore it is his will,—*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

3. It implies, that the whole spiritual fabric or building of the Church hangs upon him; as the superstructure leans upon the foundation and chief corner stone.

He shall build the temple, and bear the glory; says the prophet Zechariah: And Isaiah (xxii. 24.), *They shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house.* All the doctrines of the Church, and truths of the everlasting gospel, lean upon him. He is the *Alpha and Omega*. Hence we read of *the truth as it is in Jesus*: They meet in him, as the spokes of a wheel in the nave. All the promises meet in him, they are *in him yea and amen.* All the precepts lean upon his authority, for the law is the law of Christ; it is his *yoke and burden.* The whole discipline of the Church hangs upon him. The keys of doctrine and discipline hang at his girdle. The government of the Church pertains to him; for it is laid upon his shoulder. The ordinances and worship of the Church hang on him; no sort of worship, or a part of worship can be admitted, but what bears the impression of his institution. The officers of the Church hang upon him, for their commission and success in their work; in a word, all the members of the Church hang upon him. The whole *offspring and issue, the vessels of small quantity, from vessels of cups to vessels of flacons,—hang on him; as a nail in a sure place.*

4. His being made the Head-stone of the corner implies, that he is the alone center of unity in the Church: for the head-stone of the corner knits the whole building together; and if that be removed, the walls of the house fall asunder,—and so the whole fabric is ruined. If we do not hold the Head-stone of the corner, by which the *whole building is supplied and knit together*; the fabric of a Church, however politically framed, can never stand long.

And the reason why the house is tottering at this day, is because there is too much of a retceding from the Corner-stone. Usually indeed in a time of defection, the pulpits of these builders whose hands are deepest in it—ring with the doctrine of peace; and if a tongue be moved against the corrupt measures they are going into, the cry is raised,—*These that turn the world upside down, are come hither also*: While in the mean time, it is such as depart from the Corner-stone that ruin and tear the building; and not they who give warning to the house or family, of its being in danger of falling. They who do give warning may lay their account to be beaten by their fellow builders, that are losing the Corner-stone. But this needs be no surprise, for in all ages Christ's witnesses have tormented them that dwell upon the earth: And it needs be no discouragement; for though they may be killed and buried, yet there will be a resurrection both of names and persons.

5. His being the Head-stone of the corner implies, that Christ is the beauty and ornament of his Church: For much of the beauty and ornament of the building lies in the corner-stone. We are told,—*The daughters of Zion were like corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace*. Christ is the glory of his people Israel; and no wonder, for he is the brightness of his Father's glory. When he is in the midst of his Church, countenancing his ordinances and judicatories; then it is,—*she looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners*. But when he departs, all the glory departs; and a dismal *Ichabod* succeeds: *Yea, wo also unto them when I depart from them*: As may be seen at this day, in the once famous Churches of Lesser Asia; and other places where Christ had once flourishing Churches. They departed from the chief Corner-stone in doctrine, discipline, worship, and government; and this provoked him to depart: And, upon his departure, the songs of their temples were turned into howlings.

6. It implies, that they who would build the Church of Christ must still have him in their eye; and that the whole of their conduct and administration in the house of God, must be regulated with a view to his glory and honour. If, in building a house, the chief corner-stone be not kept in view,—irregular work cannot miss to ensue: Just so is it in the case in hand; if we shall pretend to build the house of God, and do not keep our eyes on Christ and his honour and interest, whether in matters of discipline or doctrine,—instead of building the Church, we do but disorder and disturb it, and throw all into confusion. When we begin to work by carnal policy,—or to have a squint eye upon serving the lusts and humours of men, great or small; or our own worldly interests, and not the glory of our Great Redeemer: We but ruin and pull down the Church of Christ, instead of buikling it; and are fair to bury our name, our ministry, and our own souls, and the souls of multitudes,—in the rubbish of it. Therefore there is much need of disinterested views, in the management of the affairs of Christ. We that are Ministers, as well as others, had much need

to learn the lesson of self-denial : To deny our own wisdom, and our worldly interests,—as a trifle in respect of his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom.

7. The text implies, that God and corrupt builders are driving quite different measures and designs. The builders reject the Stone, but God will have it to be the Head-stone of the Corner ; and which of the parties shall prevail, it is easy to judge. Christ shall sit at his Father's right hand, till all his enemies be made his footstool. He will break them that rise up against him, as a potter's vessel : *I have set my King*, says the Lord, *upon my holy Hill of Zion* ; and who is he that will dethrone him ?

What was last proposed in the method, was the APPLICATION of the whole. All the use I shall make of what has been said, shall be wrapt up in the following Inferences.

1st, From what has been said, we may see the excellency of the Church of Christ : She is a building, an house for God to dwell in among the children of men. So valuable is this building, that this whole visible creation is only as a theatre or scaffold for rearing the house ; and whenever the building is compleated, the scaffold will be taken down and committed to the flames. To discover the high estimate God puts upon his Church, he calls her by the most endearing names and epithets. He designs her his *spouse*, his *love*, his *dove*, his *undefiled*, his *treasure*, his *portion*, his *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*, his *bed* ; his resting-place, his walking-place, and his dwelling-place. A whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—lay themselves out in their particular œconomy, for the up-building of this house : The grace of the Father, the love and blood of the Son, and all the gracious influences and operations of the Holy Ghost,—are laid out for carrying on the work. The whole administrations of providence, in the government of the world,—are adjusted for the benefit of the Church, and the faithful members thereof. For this end the reins of administration, the keys of hell and death,—were committed into the hands of Christ ; for God hath given him *to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body*. The Father hath put all things into the hand of the Son ; that so all the wheels of providence might be rolled and turned about for the good of them that love him, and who are the called according to his purpose. The whole institution and administration of gospel ordinances, and all the officers of his ordination, whether ordinary or extraordinary,—are designed for her edification *.—This may let us see what a valuable trust we have among our hands, to whom God has committed the affairs of the Church ; and how tenderly it concerns us to manage them, even like those who are to make an account to the great Lord of the house.

2^{dly}, Is Christ *the Stone* in a way of eminence ? Then we may see how necessary and useful it is to preach Christ. He is *the Stone* by way of eminence ; the Stone of God's laying, of his choosing,
and

* Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

and the Stone which God will have for the Head-Stone of the Corner. Paul, as a wise master-builder, laid this foundation among his hearers ; and declares that *another foundation can no man lay*. It is Christ whom we preach : I, says he, *determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*. The whole of the scripture revelation meets in him as its centre : All the histories, prophecies, promises, types, precepts, doctrines, and ordinances of the word,—they are just full of Christ. The whole Bible, what is it, but the Testament of Christ ; and the testimonial that Christ brought from heaven ? *These are they which testify of me. These things are written, that ye may believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God ; and that believing ye may have life in him*. And to be sure, what is the scope of the whole revelation of the mind of God in the word,—ought to be the scope and design of all our sermons. Whatever particular doctrines we insist upon, ought still to be grafted upon the blessed branch that springs out of the root of Jesse ; for the truth is only right dispensed, and right known, as it is in Jesus.

Hence the great Mr Durham tells us (in his first sermon on Isa. liii.), “ That Christ stands under a fourfold relation to preaching :
 “ 1. He is the Text of all ; all preaching is to explain him,—and
 “ that preaching that does not stand in relation to him, is a
 “ preaching beside the text. 2. He is the ground work and foun-
 “ dation of preaching ; so that preaching without him wants a
 “ foundation, and is but building castles in the air. 3. He is the
 “ great end of preaching ; namely, to set him on high in the
 “ hearts and affections of our hearers : The design of preaching is
 “ not to make ourselves, but our Master, great ; to cause his name
 “ to be remembered. 4. He is the very power and life of preach-
 “ ing, for he is *the power of God and the wisdom of God* : And the
 “ gospel is called *the power of God unto salvation ; for therein is*
 “ *the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*.”—Thus far that great man.

3dly, If the Ministers of the Gospel be builders of the house ; then see hence the need of trying a man's acquaintance with Christ, and the power of religion,—before he is admitted into ministerial communion, as a fellow builder in the house of God. Why ; that man who is not really acquainted with Christ in an experimental way, may be fair to reject the stone of God's chusing ; and so ruin the buikling, and bury himself and many souls in the ruins of it. Masons know one another ; they have certain signs and words, by which they are capable to distinguish men of their own art and business from others : So, skilful builders in the house of God are capable, by a spiritual discerning,—to know who are fit for being admitted to the work of the Lord, and who not. If such a discerning be given even unto Church-members, as to *try the spi its whe-ther they are of God* ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world* : Much more may it be supposed, that this discern-
 ing

* 1 John iv. 1.

ing faculty is to be found among faithful Ministers of the Gospel. Hence is that of the Apostle to Timothy,—*Th things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men ; who shall be able to teach others also* *.

4thly, Is it so, that the Stone is rejected by the builders ? Then see hence what a fatal and pernicious thing,—a corrupt, erroneous and ignorant ministry is to the Church of Christ. Why ; they spoil, mar and destroy the whole building : They run counter to the great plot of heaven ; by casting away the Stone, which God has ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner. The new mode of preaching some men have fallen into, with their harangues and flourishes of mortality,—while Christ is scarce named, from the beginning to the end of their discourse ; I look on as a plot of hell to throw out the Corner-stone, in order to bring us back into heathenish or antichristian darkness. Christ is the light of the world ; and if he be removed, or shuffled out, where are we,—but just in the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty ? So that, I say, a corrupt ministry, whatever be their fine parts,—are the very bane of the Church of Christ.

5thly, If it be God's great design, that Christ should be the chief Stone of the Corner ; if this, I say, be the resolution of Heaven : Then see hence, that all the attempts of hell for the depressing of Christ, and the ruin of his cause,—whether by open enemies or pretended builders,—shall be abortive in the issue. For *the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure ; in spite of hell and earth.* And what is his pleasure and counsel ? Why, here it is : *The Stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the Head-stone of the Corner.* The gates of hell have made many an attempt, to get the Stone of God's chusing rejected,—in order to the ruin of the Church ; but they have never yet prevailed, and never shall : Infinite Wisdom hath always taken *the wise in their own craftiness*, and turned *the counsel of the froward headlong* ; and made these very devices of hell and its instruments, subservient to lift the Corner-stone higher in the building,—to the shame and ruin of those who attempted to reject it. *This little stone cut out of the mountain*, hath always proved too hard for all the metals that clashed with it ; and it will be so to the end of time.

6thly, See from what is said, what it is that makes a flourishing Church. It is not her external peace, plenty or prosperity ; nor her connection in politics with Kings or Parliaments,—patrons, heritors, or any other set of men : But her connection with the chief Corner-stone. This, and this only, is what beautifies the whole building ; and makes her *increase with the Increase of God.*

7thly, See hence, great ground of lamentation and humiliation at this day. The Stone is rejected, which God would have to be the chief Stone of the Corner. Is he not rejected in his prophetic office ; through the prevailing ignorance and unbelief that is to be found among the hearers of the gospel ? The old complaint
may

may still be renewed in our day, *Who hath believed our report?* Is he not rejected in his priestly office; while the generality, with the Jews, go about to *establish their own righteousness*,—and refuse the righteousness of God? And is he not rejected in his kingly office and headship in his Church; by the abounding prophane-ness, atheism and inmorality of our day: By the generality of professed Christians, their breaking his bonds and casting his cords from them? I cannot now stand, to give a full narrative of the injuries which have been done to the royal prerogative of this King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The Roman Antichrist has for a long time invaded the prerogative of the Son of God, by usurping a headship over the Church; *He sitteth in the Temple of God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God.* At the imperfect Reformation of England, when they threw off the Pope as head of the Church; they lodged the same in the King, declaring him to be the supreme head in all causes civil or ecclesiastic. In the late days of Scotland's apostasy from God, the crown was sacrilegiously taken from Christ's head among us also; and set upon the head of a persecuting Apostate. Dreadful were the invasions and encroachments that were made upon the Crown-royal of the King of Zion,—by Kings, Parliaments, and persons of all ranks: Particularly by the act rescissory,—whereby axes and hammers were lifted up upon the carved work of the Temple; hewing down the glorious work of Reformation, restoring abjured Prelacy, rescinding the obligation of our solemn Covenants,—yea, ordering them to be burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh, by the hand of the common hangman; persecuting to the very death, all that owned a work of reformation.

In these bloody days, the headship and sovereignty of Christ was contended for by many of the Lord's worthies; even unto death: And it has been the peculiar honour of the Church of Scotland, particularly in these days of persecution,—to bear testimony unto Christ, as the alone Head and King of his Church; in opposition to these dangerous and heaven-daring encroachments that were made upon it. And it is much to be regreted and lamented,—that, since the Lord turned back our captivity in any measure at the late wonderful Revolution, whereby we were freed from the yoke of lordly prelacy; we have not been so zealous for our great King and his prerogatives, which were so much invaded, as might been expected upon our deliverance from that Egyptian thralldom. [I do not remember of any particular act of Assembly, since the Revolution,—whereby the rights of the Crown of Christ are asserted, in opposition to the encroachments that were made upon them in these days of public apostasy and persecution]. Yea, instead of that, are there not invasions and encroachments made upon the authority of Christ, and the immunities of his kingdom,—even since that period. Particularly in the end of Queen Anne's reign, when designs were
formed

formed for the overthrow of a Protestant succession; his headship and authority was invaded by an almost boundless toleration of all errors in doctrine, and corruptions in worship: Excepting Popery and blasphemy against the Holy Trinity,—two evils that never prevailed more in the memory of man in these lands, than since the toleration-act was passed. His authority was at the same time invaded by the act restoring patronages; whereby power is given to a malignant Lord or Laird to present a man to take the charge of precious souls, who has perhaps no more concern about their salvation than the Great Turk. And is it not matter of lamentation,—to see some of the judicatories of this Church, whose province it is to contend for the sovereignty of Christ and the rights of his subjects, falling in with patrons and heritors of the nation; in opposition to the known rights of the Christian people, to elect and chuse their own pastors? How are the rights of the Lord's people invaded and trode upon, by violent settlements up and down the land? [A cry is gone up to heaven against the builders, by the spouse of Christ; like that (Cant. v. 7.): *The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me.* A cry and complaint came in before the bar of the last Assembly, for relief and redress of these and many other grievances; both from Ministers and people: But instead of a due regard had thereunto, an act is passed confining the power of election unto heritors and elders; whereby a new wound is given to the prerogative of Christ, and the privileges of his subjects]. I shall say the less of this act now,—that I had opportunity to exoner myself with relation to it, before the National Assembly where it was passed. [Only allow me to say,—that whatever Church-authority may be in that act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God. All ecclesiastical authority under heaven is derived from him; and therefore any act that wants his authority, has no authority at all. And seeing the Reverend Synod has put me in this place, where I am in Christ's stead; I must be allowed to say of this act, what I apprehend Christ himself would say of it were he personally present where I am;—and that is, that by this act the Corner-stone is receded from; he is rejected in his poor members, and the rich of this world put in their room: If Christ were personally present, where I am by the Synod's appointment in his stead; he would say, in reference to that act,—*Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these*

these little ones, ye did it to me. By this act, Christ is rejected in his authority; because I can find no warrant from the word of God, to confer the spiritual privileges of his House upon the rich beyond the poor: Whereas, by this act, the man with the gold ring and gay clothing—is preferred unto the man with the vile raiment and poor attire]. I add further of this act,—that I judge it inconsistent with the principles and practice of the best reformed Churches, asserted in their public Confessions of Faith; and particularly with the known principles of this Church since the Reformation, asserted in our Books of Discipline,—which we are bound by solemn Covenant to maintain. I am firmly persuaded,—that, if a timely remedy be not provided, this act will very soon terminate in the overthrow of the Church of Scotland; and of a faithful Ministry therein: In regard that the power of electing Ministers is thereby principally lodged in the hands of a set of men, who are generally disaffected to the power of godliness,—to the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of this Church; as well as the government of our gracious Sovereign King GEORGE, and the Protestant succession in his family.

All sound Presbyterians, who read the history of our forefathers,—generally approve of the practice of Mr Samuel Rutherford, Mr James Guthrie, and other worthy Ministers of this Church; who protested against the public resolutions,—as a thing inconsistent with our Covenants, and prejudicial to the work of reformation; although thereby the door was only opened to malignants to come into places of civil or military trust: And we who live at this time of day, may see the pernicious effects these resolutions had in the Church of Scotland. But what would our forefathers have thought, or what will succeeding generations think of this act of Assembly; whereby malignants are vested, not with a civil or military, but with an ecclesiastical power,—in the settlement of the generality of Ministers through the Church of Scotland? By which means the Church of Scotland, and her sacred privileges,—are rendered exceeding cheap, even in the eyes of her avowed enemies; this being a compliment they neither expected nor desired at our hands. But, after all, I have good reason to believe,—that this act is far from being the mind of the generality of Presbyteries through this national Church; and therefore I would gladly hope a seasonable stand shall yet be made against it, in order to prevent its pernicious consequences.

My last inference shall be in a word of *exhortation*. Are Ministers of the Gospel builders of the Church; and is it the great plot of heaven, to have Christ exalted as the Head-stone of the Corner? Then let me call and exhort my Reverend Brethren and Fathers (and I desire to apply the exhortation to myself), to concur with heart and hand in lifting up the chief Corner-stone; and making

making his name to be remembered unto all generations, that the people may praise him for ever and ever. However he has been, or still is rejected by other builders, yet let us study to exalt him; saying one to another,—*O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.*

I shall not stay, after what has been said, to use many *motives*. Only in so many words, let us consider the excellency of his person; and the relation he bears to us and others of our tribe or family, both by nature and office: He being *Immanuel, God with us*; ordained the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church,—to answer the maladies and miseries of ignorance, guilt, and bondage we are brought under by the sin of the first Adam. Let us consider,—*That it is his Father's will that all men should honour him, as they honour the Father himself: Yea, his Father has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; and hath ordered, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Let us consider, that this is the work of the Holy Ghost: The great scope of all his dictates in the word, and of all his graces, influences and operations in the heart,—being to lift up this Corner-stone*. This is the work wherein angels delight to be employed: With what alacrity do they celebrate his nativity, and tell the tidings of it unto the shepherds†. This was the work of all the Prophets under the Old Testament; they all prophesied of him,—testified of his sufferings, and of the glory that should follow. They were as so many harbingers, sent to prepare the world for the reception of this glorious Person.—All the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, given by him unto the New-Testament Church,—have had this as the great scope of their ministry; to edify the body of Christ, by lifting up the glory of this Head-stone of the Corner‡. In short, this is and has been the business of the Church militant here upon earth; and will be the work of the Church triumphant through eternity. They all with one voice cry,—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*||. And is it not glorious encouragement to us, to lift up the honour of our Redeemer; when we have such good company to join us in our work?

Again, let us consider that Christ is *the Stone*, without which there can be no building; for he is the Church's all: *Christ is all and in all*: He is her light, her life, her righteousness, her strength, her peace, her food, her clothing, her wisdom, her holiness. So that if he be wanting, all is wanting; and the Church is ruined. We cannot answer the commission we bear from our great Master, if we do not exalt the chief Corner-stone. *It is Christ whom we preach*§. We are to be of Paul's spirit; *to know nothing among*

Vol. I.

3 E

our

* John xvi. 14.

† Luke ii. 10,—14.

‡ Rev. iv. 10.

|| Rev. v. 12.

§ Col. i. 27, 28.

our hearers, *but Christ and him crucified* : We are always to triumph in the revelation of Christ, so as the *favour of his knowledge* may be made *manifest by us in every place*. To conclude, we can never finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord ; except this be the great scope of our work,—whether in doctrine, discipline, worship or government.

I shall shut up this discourse, with a few *Advices* ; in order to our being successful builders of this glorious fabric, wherein Christ is the Head-Stone of the corner.

1. Let us beware of the fatal errors before-mentioned ; whereby the Jewish builders ruined their once glorious fabric, and buried themselves in the ruins thereof. Let us beware of these doctrines vented in our day, which disparage the person of our glorious Redeemer ; and derogate from his supreme and independent Deity, or his headship and sovereignty in his Church. Let us beware of nauseating the spirituality of his doctrine, and the sublime mysteries of our holy religion ; preferring thereunto the harangues of Moralists. When we preach the law, let us open it in its extent and spirituality ; so as to turn in its edge upon the heart and conscience, that it may be a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Let us preach up the everlasting righteousness of the Son, as the only ground of a sinner's justification ; and beware of every thing, that has the least tendency to foster a sinner in his hope of salvation by the works of the law. Let us beware of blocking up the door of access to Christ, by legal qualifications ; which are no where to be had, but in Christ himself. Let us beware of formality, either in preaching or praying ; whereby we may deaden the ordinances of God to our own souls, or the souls of our hearers : And, in order thereto, let us take care to license or lay hands upon none,—but such as, in the judgment of charity, we have reason to think are acquainted with the power of godliness ; even though they have been trained up in literature, at the foot of a professor of divinity. Let us beware of carnal policy, in the matters of Christ's kingdom and glory. Let us beware of valuing ourselves upon the favour of men, great or small. Especially let us take care, that we be not swayed in the matters of Christ with the favour of great men ; for this has been a snare in Mispah, and a net spread upon Tabor. Let us study impartially the exercise of discipline, and beware of turning the edge of it against them that deserve it least. And let us set ourselves to stop these passages into the house of God, by which thieves and robbers most ordinarily enter, that the house of God be not turned into a den of thieves.

2. In order to our being successful builders, let us seek the builder's word from the great Master-builder : For there is a word which Christ gives his faithful Ministers, whereby the art of building is much conveyed. *I have given them thy word* *. Without this word from the mouth of Christ, we will never know the true art of building

* John xvii. 14.

ing the Church : By this word, the man of God is made a perfect builder; thoroughly furnished unto every good work. And if you ask me, what is that word ? I answer, it is an experimental acquaintance with the power of the word upon the soul ; particularly the knowledge of that leading mystery, *God manifested in the flesh*.

3. Let us take care, that every stone of the building correspond with the foundation and Corner-Stone : Whatever doctrines or practices do not hang right with this regulating Stone, let them be cast. In order to which,—let us examine our own and others doctrines and conversation, by the plumb-line and infallible rule of the word *.

4. Let us observe the signs of the times ; and whenever we discern the danger a-coming, either from open enemies or pretended friends, [or our fellow-builders going wrong ; let us give the cry, like faithful watchmen : And though they be offended, there is no help for that. It is a heavy charge that is laid by God against some as above,—that they were *dumb dogs that could not bark*]; but preferred their own carnal case, unto the safety of the Church †.

5. Let us wrestle much at a throne of grace, for the countenance of the great Master ; and assistance of his Spirit : for *except the Lord build the house, the builders build in vain;—Paul may plant, and Apollos water ; but it is God who giveth the increase*.

* * * * *

Upon the delivery of the foregoing Sermon, the Synod appointed a committee to draw up Remarks upon it : And they spent much of three days, in warm reasonings concerning it ; particularly as to the passages referred to in the Committee's report, which are printed here in a larger character. Upon the whole,—the Synod having appointed (*October 12th, 1732*) that Mr *Erskine* should be rebuked and admonished at their bar, for these passages of his Sermon ; but finding that he was not in the house : They “ resolved, “ if he be in the house to-morrow, to call him up to be rebuked ; “ and if he should not be present to-morrow, they resolved to call “ him up at their meeting in *April* next—to rebuke and admonish “ him in terms of the sentence.”

At their meeting in *Stirling*, on the 12th of *April 1733*,—“ Mr *Erskine* being called and compearing, and the Synod going to “ execute their sentence in the terms of their appointment ;” he offered to deliver his mind as to the affair of the censure upon his sermon, which was then before them,—but was not allowed : Whereupon he adhered to his appeal, and withdrew. But being called back, he was told by the Moderator that he was allowed to speak ;

* Isa. viii. 2.

† Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12.

speak ; and thereupon he read a paper (immediately withdrawing when he had done so), the tenor whereof follows, viz.

“ According to the utterance given by the Lord to me at *Perth*,
 “ I delivered his mind ; particularly with relation to some *prevail-*
 “ *ing evils of the day*, which to me are matter of confession : And
 “ therefore I *dare not retract* the least part of that *Testimony*. I am
 “ heartily sorry, that ever the Reverend Synod should have com-
 “ menced a process against me, for what I am persuaded was no-
 “ thing else but truth ; especially when they have never yet
 “ made it appear, that I have in the least receded from the *word*
 “ of God,—and our *approved Standards* of doctrine, worship, dis-
 “ cipline and government. Every man has his own proper gift
 “ of utterance ; and according to the gift bestowed on me, so I
 “ expressed myself at *Perth* ; and if I had given offence by any
 “ expressions uttered by me at that time, I should very willingly
 “ retract and beg pardon: But I hope my Reverend Brethren will
 “ excuse me to say, *That I am not yet convinced of any just ground*
 “ *given for a Rebuke and Admonition.*”

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



II.

w.

h,

il-

ad

un

n-

o-

et

d

f-

ft

I

y

y

ll

d